

# God and His Sanctuary



**What Daniel can tell us about 1844, the  
“cleansing of the sanctuary,” and what Jesus  
is now doing in the heavenly sanctuary.**

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***God and His Sanctuary*** addresses those doctrinal issues now being discussed within and without the Seventh-day Adventist Church regarding the validity of the church's historic interpretation of Daniel's 2300-year/day prophecy (Daniel 8 and 9). Included in this book's examination of those fundamental beliefs now being challenged are topics such as "the little horn," the meaning of "cleansed" in Daniel 8:14, and the purpose of the preadvent judgment (or, investigative judgment) foretold by Daniel.

The publishers believe that Dr. Maxwell has blended scholarship and pastoral concern in this timely contribution to the clarification of biblical truth.

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## Publisher's Note

This volume is an extract from a larger book, *God Cares*, also published by the Pacific Press Publishing Association.

*God and His Sanctuary* addresses those doctrinal issues now being discussed within and without the Seventh-day Adventist Church regarding the validity of the church's historic interpretation of Daniel's 2300-year/day prophecy (Daniel 8 and 9). Included in this book's examination of those fundamental beliefs now being challenged are topics such as "the little horn," the meaning of "cleansed" in Daniel 8:14, and the purpose of the preadvent judgment (or, investigative judgment) foretold by Daniel.

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The reader will note frequent references to page numbers that do not apply to this volume. This inconvenience is unavoidable due to the extraction of these pages from the larger volume, *God Cares*.

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# Daniel 8

## God and His Sanctuary

### Introduction

During evening homework hours, how many parents have responded to the plaintive sigh of their children, "I just can't understand it!"

And how many parents have found that their children *could* have understood if they had read the explanation in the book!

In Daniel 8 we are invited to study yet another set of prophetic symbols; and, as for chapters 2 and 7, God provides the explanation so we can understand.

Indeed the word "**understand**" occurs so often from Daniel 8 onward that it becomes almost a motif for the balance of the book (see Daniel 8:16, 17; 9:23, 25; 10:12, 14; 11:33; 12:10).

But in Daniel 8, even though the interpretation begins right away just as it does in chapters 2 and 7, it is not completed within the limits of the chapter. It is continued at the end of chapter 9.

The prophetic symbols in Daniel 8 include beasts and horns as before and also a prophetic symbol of a period of time. While still in the vision Daniel hears a voice saying, "**Gabriel, make this man understand the vision,**" and immediately Gabriel comes to Daniel's side and bids him "**understand**" it. Verses 16 and 17.

But no sooner has Gabriel explained the beasts and horns than he finds he has to stop. The picture he has painted

has caused Daniel, now an old man, to faint away. The vision ceases and Daniel says regretfully—almost like a child doing his homework—"I was **appalled by the vision and did not understand it.**" Verse 27.

This is where Daniel 9 will fit in, a few years later. When Daniel gives himself heart and soul to the understanding of time prophecy, Gabriel will appear again, explaining that he has come to give Daniel "**wisdom and understanding.**" Calling on him once more to "**understand the vision,**" the angel will start right in to resolve the time symbolism, just where he had left off at the end of Daniel 8.

It has often been pointed out that Jesus urged every one of us to "understand" Daniel 8 and 9 during His famous conversation with the disciples on the Mount of Olives (the "Olivet Discourse") a few nights before His crucifixion. Citing a key phrase from Daniel 9:27, similar to one in Daniel 8:13, Jesus said significantly, "Let the reader understand." Matthew 24:15.

It is attractive to assume that it was also *Jesus who commanded Gabriel to make Daniel understand the vision* in the first place. Daniel 8:15, 16 says:

**When I, Daniel, had seen the vision [of the beasts, horns, and time symbol]. I sought to understand it; and behold, there stood before me one having the appearance of a man. And I heard a**

*When God chose to represent Persia and Greece by a ram and a goat, animals of the sanctuary services, He called our attention to the centrality of the sanctuary in Daniel 8.*

**man's voice between the banks of the [river] Ulai, and it called, "Gabriel, make this man understand the vision."**

The New Testament tells us in Luke 1:19 that Gabriel is the angel who stands "in the presence of God." Any being who can issue a command to Gabriel must rank very high in the administration of the universe. In the passage we just read, this exalted being is described as **"one having the appearance of a man."** Who could this being be but the same Person who in Daniel 7:13, is described as **"one like a son of man"**—that is, Jesus Christ, who is called the Son of man forty times in the Gospels (see p. 110)?

So Jesus our Saviour deeply desires us to understand the prophecy of Daniel 8 and 9.

And it is well worth our understanding. For it applies to the **"time of the end"** (Daniel 8:17), and it deals with the grandest theme of the ages.

Daniel 2 takes us through the rise and fall of nations and reaches its climax as Jesus Christ, the supernatural

stone, sets up His kingdom of glory.

Daniel 7 takes us through the political scenes a second time, adding the tragic course of medieval Christianity, and reaches its climax as the judgment meets in heaven, where Christ receives His kingdom and graciously shares it with every "saint" found worthy.

Chapters 8 and 9 likewise take us through the political entities of history (omitting Babylon this time) and through medieval Christianity, but they point more directly to Christ's work of atonement and of salvation from sin which makes it possible for sinners to become saints so that they *can* inherit the kingdom.

Daniel 2 focuses on Christ our King.

Daniel 7 focuses on Christ our Judge.

Daniel 8 and 9 focus on Christ our High Priest, who died for our sins and is living again for our salvation.

As you read Daniel 8 (on the next page), see how much of it you can understand without further assistance. Then we'll discuss some of its aspects in detail.

# The Message of Daniel 8

## I. Two More Beasts Foreshadow the Future

“But, sir,” shouted several of Alexander’s soldiers, “look at their wagons! As soon as we climb up anywhere near them, they’ll let the heavy things roll down and crush us. What can we do?”

“What can you do?” smiled Alexander. “You can lie down with your long shields covering your bodies and let the wagons roll over you. Then you can get up and finish the job.”

*The two beasts and their horns.* We’ll meet Alexander again in a moment. In the meantime we note with complete assurance the identification of the two beasts and their several horns in the first part of Daniel 8.

The ram with two horns, the shorter of which came to be the taller one, is specifically identified with Media and Persia. Daniel 8:20. The one-horned goat that flew over the ground and vanquished the ram is specifically called Greece. Daniel 8:21. Its single horn is defined (Daniel 8:22) as its “**first king**,” Alexander, or more properly as the kingdom of Alexander. (We have seen in Daniel 7:17, 23 that “king” equals “kingdom.”) The four horns that rose when the single horn was broken are the four kingdoms (Daniel 8:22) into which Alexander’s Hellenistic-Greek Empire was, for a time, divided, under Lysimachus, Cassander, Seleucus, and Ptolemy (see pages 104, 106).

The symbols are so apt that it is easy to forget that Daniel saw their fulfillment a long time in advance.

Now, Daniel 8:1, 2 says that in his vision Daniel seemed to be standing at the river Ulai (a canal 300 meters or about 900 feet wide) that used to flow near the ancient city of Susa. The point is that he was located at a community, Susa (or Shusha or Shushan), that would figure prominently as a treasure city and winter capital for the Medo-Persian Empire. In this symbolic way he was carried forward in time to the Medo-Persian period.

According to Daniel 8:1 the actual time of this vision was the third year of Belshazzar, 551 B.C., two years later than the vision of Daniel 7. The Babylonian Empire still had a dozen years to live, but a perceptive observer like Daniel could have discerned that its days were numbered. Nabonidus, its supreme king, was off in Tema developing a trade center and reviving moon worship. Belshazzar, the coregent, was allowing the economy of the capital to collapse. On the other hand Cyrus, the vigorous king of Persia, was out to conquer the world. God did not bother to include Babylon in this prophecy.

Cyrus is thought to have been the grandson of the final king of Media. At its height Media stretched through mountains from the river Halys in the northwest to the Persian Gulf in the southeast. By contrast Cyrus at first ruled only the tiny Median province of Persia. At that time the Median horn was much taller than the Persian horn.

But in 553, the year of the vision of Daniel 7, Cyrus rebelled against his grandfather, King Astyages, and soon subjugated Media under his own control. In 547, four years after the vision of Daniel 8, Cyrus would annex Lydia, extending his realm beyond the river Halys to the Aegean Sea. In 539 he would add Babylon. Thus the horn that came up second would find itself taller than the first one.

Broad-minded and generous, Cyrus treated the Medes as allies rather than as subjects, giving rise to the term "Medo-Persian Empire." In time, however, the Persian horn grew so tall that the empire was known simply as "Persian."

The Persian Empire enjoyed great leadership under several of its rulers besides Cyrus including, for example, Darius I (522-486) and Artaxerxes I (465-423), both of whom treated the Jews especially well and will deserve mention when we come to chapter 9. But Darius III (336-331), the final Persian emperor, was a weak ruler, certainly no match for Alexander the Great.

Alexander defeated Darius's immensely larger armies three times in three great military matches: first, by the river Granicus in Phrygia in 334; second, at the coast near Issus in Cilicia in 333; and third, on the plain of Arbela (or Gaugamela) in Syria in 331. Alexander's goat easily trounced Persia's ram, just as Daniel had foreseen two hundred years earlier.

*God and Alexander's success.* An article in the *Scientific American*<sup>1</sup> attributes Alexander's success partly to the Greek development of torsion artillery shortly before his time. Torsion artillery consisted of large catapults powered by heavy ropes of hair and sinew, twisted, like torsion springs with a ratchet and then released. They could shoot heavy stones repeatedly at a selected spot on a city wall until the wall gave way, and they could shoot oversized arrows into enemy ranks before the enemy archers were close enough to shoot their conventional weapons. Designed by highly skilled mathematician-engineers, they were remarkably accurate. A catapult constructed according to ancient specifications some years ago in Germany is reported actually to have split one of its arrows with a subsequent one, in the best style of Robin Hood.

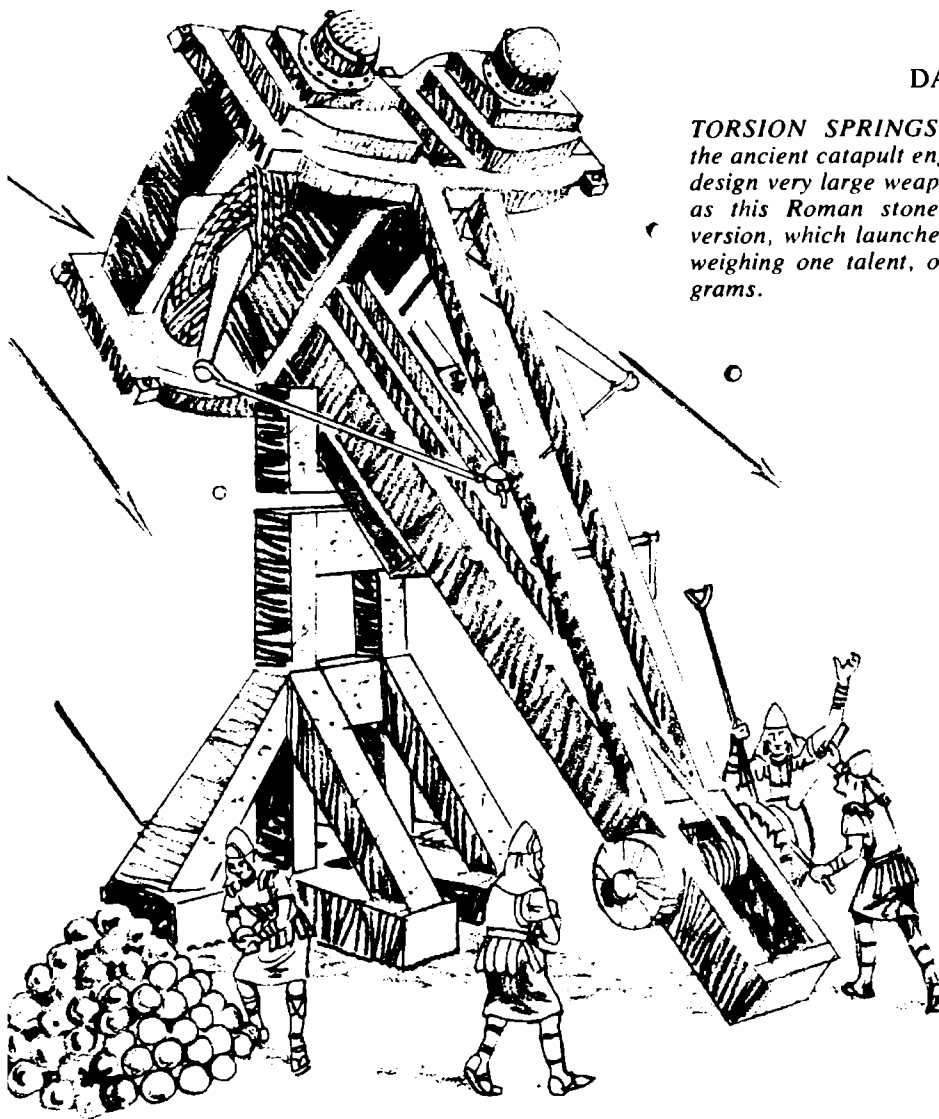
Better known than his catapults are Alexander's personal qualifications for success. As we have seen in the case of the wagons, he seemed always to know what to do—when to attack or delay, whether to follow up a victory by chasing the enemy or to hold back and consolidate his position. He was physically brave. When one of his generals was killed at the siege of Tyre in the act of pressing through a breach in the city wall, Alexander unhesitatingly stepped into his place. And he could march all night. Once he led his cavalry with scarcely a pause on a chase that lasted for three days and *four* nights!<sup>2</sup>

But in spite of Alexander's remarkable equipment and talents, we cannot escape the conviction that things might have turned out very differently if King Darius had not been such a notable coward. Darius's Persians vastly outnumbered the Greeks. At Arbela the Persians are said to have pitted a million men against Alexander's 47,000.<sup>3</sup> But at Granicus, Issus, and Arbela, King Darius lost his nerve at the first sign of a reverse, turned his chariot around, and fled for his life—a



## DANIEL 8

*TORSION SPRINGS* enabled the ancient catapult engineers to design very large weapons, such as this Roman stone-throwing version, which launched a stone weighing one talent, or 26 kilograms.



signal in those days for the entire Persian army to flee also.

In an unusually intriguing passage the Bible says that “the king’s heart is a stream of water in the hand of the Lord; he turns it wherever he will.” Proverbs 21:1. Historical accounts indicate that a single hour of courage on Darius’s part in any one of his three great battles might well have saved his army and enabled it to annihilate Alexander’s forces. Had God seen fit, He could easily have supplied Darius with this needed courage. He gave Daniel courage to face lions. He gave Daniel’s friends courage to face a fiery furnace. But the Persian Empire had chosen to find its way without faith in the God of Israel, and in Persia’s hour of crisis God allowed human weakness to run its course.

Daniel 7:6 says that dominion was “**given**” to the Greeks. Evidently the same

God who “gave” unrepentant Judah into the hands of Nebuchadnezzar (Daniel 1:2), and who “gave” decadent Babylon into the hands of Cyrus (Daniel 5:28), now “gave” the degenerate Persian Empire into the hands of Alexander. So does the “God who cares” oversee the affairs of men.

*Three beasts “prolonged.”* Daniel 7:12 says that the lives of the first three beasts of chapter 7, unlike that of the fourth beast, were to be “**prolonged for a season and a time**” after their dominion had been taken away. In a symbolic gesture Alexander married a Bactrian princess, Roxane, and he enthusiastically endorsed the marriages of 10,000 of his Greek soldiers to Persian wives. Indeed Alexander revealed remarkably cosmopolitan statesmanship. He creatively set in motion a blending of the old Babylonian and Persian cultures with the Greek (or “Hellenic”) culture, which was to stamp civilization as “Hellenistic” for centuries to come. Thus elements of Babylonian, Persian, and Greek civilizations persisted “**for a season and a time.**” Indeed many of them influence us to this day.

“Of no other man can it be said with equal justice,” observes a modern historian whose views are widely shared, “that he laid his mark upon all the civilizations that followed him in the lands where he had fought, and upon all those civilizations to the West which in turn took over from them.”<sup>4</sup>

*The “little horn” of Daniel 8:9-14.* After Alexander’s death his horn, that is, his kingdom, was divided into “**four conspicuous horns toward the four winds of heaven.**” The narrative continues: “**Out of one of them came forth a little horn, which grew exceedingly great.**”

Identification of this little horn will occupy our attention more or less during the next four sections. A word of clarification at this point will be helpful.

Readers of the English versions sometimes assume that when the Bible says that the little horn arose out of “**one of them,**” it means that it arose out of one of the four horns. What the Bible really means, however, is that the little horn arose out of one of the four winds; that is, that it arose out of one of the four directions of the compass. (We are dealing with an idiom.)

How can this be?

Nouns in Hebrew have grammatical gender. They are considered to be either masculine, feminine, or neuter. Many other languages also employ grammatical gender. And it is a rule in all of them that pronouns must agree with their antecedent nouns in being similarly masculine, feminine, or neuter. Even in English we think of a ship as feminine and refer to one with the feminine pronouns “she” and “her.”

In the Hebrew for Daniel 8:8, 9, “horns” is feminine, and “winds” is either masculine or feminine. In the phrase “out of one of them,” the pronoun “them” is masculine. This means that the antecedent noun for “them” cannot be “horns” but must be “winds.”

Thus the little horn was to appear out of one of the four winds. It was to arise from one of the four directions of the compass.

It is cogent to our study that the Roman Empire, small at first, arose from a

point *westward* from the first three empires of prophecy. It is regrettable that some readers have supposed that the little horn of Daniel 8 was the strange little king, Antiochus Epiphanes.

## II. The Horn That Trampled the Sanctuary

The little horn of Daniel 8 has been thought by some Bible students to be one of the Seleucid kings, Antiochus IV, commonly known as Antiochus Epiphanes (an-TIE-uh-kus e-PIF-uh-neeZ).\*

Antiochus Epiphanes persecuted conservative Jews and suspended the temple services between the years 168 and 165 B.C. In discussing his activities, 1 and 2 Maccabees, two of the books in the Apocrypha, quote phrases from Daniel 8 and 9.

But of course the Bible doesn't *state* that the little horn of Daniel 8 is Antiochus Epiphanes, and there are many ways in which he does not fit the prophecy at all. Horns represent kingdoms, and he was only an individual king—a part of one of the four horns. He did not appear at the “**latter end**” of the Seleucid kingdom (Daniel 8:23) but approximately in the middle of the line of Seleucid kings. (The Seleucid dynasty ran from 312/311 to 65 B.C., and Antiochus Epiphanes reigned from 175 to 164 B.C.)

And he did not really “**prosper**” (verse 12) or grow “**exceedingly great**” (verse 9). His father, Antiochus III, was called “the Great,” and rightly so, for he restored the original Seleucid dominions. Antiochus Epiphanes, on the other hand, was referred to sarcastically, by at least some of his contemporaries, as “Epimanes”—the mad man.<sup>5</sup> Antiochus Epiphanes, after a short-lived triumph in the “south” (Egypt), was totally defeated there when the Roman ambassador, C. Popilius Laenas, merely informed him that the Roman Senate wanted him to leave. The grim Roman drew a circle around Antiochus with his cane and demanded a decision before he stepped out of it.<sup>6</sup>

\*“Seleucid” refers to the dynasty founded by Alexander’s general, Seleucus. “Epiphanes” refers to the claim of Antiochus IV to be a manifestation, or epiphany, of God. The dates 168 and 165 B.C., used in this chapter for the interruption which Antiochus caused in the temple sacrifices, are based on the information in Parker and Dubberstein, *Babylonian Chronology*, p. 23. Some authorities prefer the dates 167 and 164 B.C.

*A Roman envoy drew a circle around Antiochus Epiphanes.*



In the “east” (Mesopotamia), Antiochus Epiphanes died under obscure and sorry circumstances. Even in the “glorious land” (Palestine), where at first he seemed successful, all his ambitions came to nothing within his lifetime.

Furthermore, all attempts to fit his desecration of the Jewish temple into “2300 evenings and mornings” have uniformly failed. The most nearly contemporary account, in Maccabees 1:54-59; 4:52-54, is overwhelmingly precise in stating that he interrupted the temple services for *three years and ten days* (from Chislew 15, 168, to Chislew 25, 165).

Now 1 Maccabees 1:54 applies the phrase “desolating sacrilege” (*hdelugma erēmōseōs*, Daniel 9:27, Greek) to what Antiochus Epiphanes did to the altar in the Jewish temple. (He evidently erected an idol on it and sacrificed a pig, to the horror of all devout Jews, for whom pigs have always been unfit for human touch.) But Jesus in the Olivet Discourse said that Daniel’s “desolating sacrilege” was still future as of His day. Matthew 24:15. He added, “Let the reader understand.” So, if we really want to understand the meaning of the little horn of Daniel 8, we shall have to conclude, with Jesus, that it cannot have been Antiochus Epiphanes, who died in 164 B.C., almost two hundred years prior to the Olivet Discourse. (For more information about Antiochus Epiphanes, see *Your Questions Answered*, pages 183-185.)

*The little horn of Daniel 8 is Rome.* The true fulfillment of the little horn of Daniel 8 can only be the Roman Empire and its successor, the Roman Church—purposely viewed, as in Daniel 7, from their darker aspects. The following considerations support this conclusion:

1. On the principle that succeeding visions in Daniel parallel and amplify earlier ones, we notice that in many ways the little horn of Daniel 8 parallels and increases our information about the little horn of Daniel 7 and the beast out of which it grew. In Daniel 2 and 7 Rome follows Greece; thus Rome follows Greece in Daniel 8 also.

2. Rome arose in the west, out of one of the “four winds” (see page 152).

3. We have already seen that, in their beastlike aspects, pagan and Christian Rome constituted a continuum. The Roman bishop was successor to the Roman emperor. Notice how a recent college textbook has expressed the matter:

In the West, the Church took over the defense of Roman civilization. The emperor gave up the [pagan] title of Pontifex Maximus (high priest) because the Roman gods were no longer worshipped. The bishop of Rome assumed these priestly functions, and this is why the Pope today is sometimes referred to as the Pontiff. When the Huns, a fierce and savage tribe led by brutal Attila [AT-ih-luh], swept into Italy and threatened to take and destroy the city of Rome, it was the leader of the Christian Church, Pope Leo, not the emperor, who met the barbarian. Attila was so impressed with the Pope’s spiritual power that he turned back. What Leo said to Attila remains unknown, but what is significant is the fact that it was the Pope and not the emperor who stood at the gates of Rome. The Roman Empire had become the Christian Church.<sup>7</sup>

Inasmuch as the Roman Church was a continuation of the Roman Empire, a single prominent horn appropriately represents both of them.

4. The Roman Empire, unlike Antiochus Epiphanes, successfully took control of the Middle East at the **“latter end”** (8:23) of the dominion of the Hellenistic kingdoms.

5. And in taking over the Middle East, the Roman Empire, unlike Antiochus Epiphanes, definitely **“grew exceedingly great toward the south, toward the east, and toward the glorious land.”** Verse 9. Coming from the west, small at first like a **“little”** horn, Rome grew as it conquered Macedonia in 168 B.C., Syria in 65 B.C., Palestine in 63 B.C., and Egypt, too, after a long protectorate, in 30 B.C., making them all provinces of its own empire. Antioch in Syria, the former Seleucid capital, became in time a Roman capital second only to Rome and Constantinople. Alexandria, the former capital of Egypt under the Ptolemies, flourished richly as a Roman city.

6. Pagan Rome emphatically and tragically **“magnified itself”** against the **“Prince of the host.”** Verse 11. Pontius Pilate and the soldiers who condemned and crucified Jesus were all Romans.

7. Both pagan and Christian Rome destroyed **“mighty men and the people of the saints”** (verse 24); that is, they both persecuted a large number of conscientious Christians and even tortured many of them in the process.

8. Both pagan and Christian Rome **“took away the continual burnt offering”** and **“overthrew the place of his sanctuary.”** Verse 11. Pagan Rome did this literally—but only in a limited sense, as we shall see later—in A.D. 70 when soldiers under the Roman general (later emperor) Titus set the temple (or Jerusalem sanctuary) on fire, causing its complete destruction and forever terminating its services. In the 130s the Roman emperor Hadrian constructed a pagan temple in Jerusalem, renamed the city Aelia Capitolina, and went so far as to forbid Jews ever to live in the city—a rule that was enforced for centuries.

*Christian Rome and the sanctuary.* But did *Christian* Rome in any sense take away the continual burnt offering and overthrow the place of His sanctuary? The answer to this question will involve an analysis of Christ's ministry as our compassionate High Priest. It will also involve an understanding of the fascinating Hebrew word *tamid*.

### III. Christ's All-of-the-Time Priesthood

I had known Ted well as a student in my classes. He was bright enough and had married a lovely girl. They had gone to a mission station in the Far East, and I had lost track of them.

Now here he was, walking into my office. At once I wanted to hear all the news about his family and his mission.

But he wanted to tell me that he no longer had a family and that he had been sent home from the mission. He had loved unwisely and had been discovered by some of the new Christians he had gone to serve. He had apologized repeatedly to

his wife, Esther. But Esther had been understandably hurt and had joined the mission director in advising him to go back to America. She had said that when she and the children got back, she would divorce him.

As things turned out, when Esther got back to America, she changed her mind and sweetly forgave her husband. At the time Ted walked into my office, however, things were very sad. Yet there was one bright gleam. Ted wanted to tell me that while he was getting ready to leave the country after Esther had put him out of the house, he had found a bed on somebody's back porch. Deeply repentant, he feared that he had sinned too seriously to be forgiven. When he awakened early one morning after a fitful night, he knew he could wait no longer to find out how he stood with God. Grabbing his Bible, he begged God to talk to him by directing his finger to an appropriate text.

He was well aware that this is not ordinarily a proper method of Bible study, and he could scarcely summon courage to open the pages for fear he would read something meaningless or, worse, something that would sound as though God had rejected him. At last, however, with his eyes squeezed shut, he did place his finger on a text and then, fearfully, opened his eyes again. And here is the text he was pointing to: "For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more." Hebrews 8:12, K.J.V.

In my K.J.V. Bible I have written Ted's real name beside that verse to help me remember his experience with it as long as I live.

In Psalm 139 David describes how hard it is to find a *place* where we can get away from God: "If I . . . dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, even there thy hand shall lead." Verses 9 and 10.

In Ted's experience I was reminded how hard it is to find a *time* when we can be away from God. In the gray light of dawn during the darkest period of his life, Ted found God dramatically ready to forgive and heal him.

Just when I need Him, Jesus is near,  
Just when I falter, just when I fear:  
Ready to help me, ready to cheer,  
Just when I need Him most."

Ted's experience effectively illustrates the real meaning of a vital Hebrew word in the heart of Daniel 8. This significant term is *tamid*. It is translated "continual burnt offering" in the R.S.V.:

**It [the little horn] magnified itself, even up to the Prince of the host; and the continual burnt offering [that is, the tamid] was taken away from him [the Prince of the host], and the place of his sanctuary was overthrown. Verse 11.**

*The tamid of Daniel 8:13, 14 is symbolic.* It would be difficult to overemphasize the importance of understanding the term "*tamid*" and its far-reaching implications.

Those Bible readers who assume that the little horn of Daniel 8 is Antiochus Epiphanes interpret *tamid* in this passage as applying merely to the morning and evening sacrifices which Antiochus canceled between 168 and 165 B.C. Other Bible readers, who realize that the little horn is a symbol of a kingdom and cannot refer to any single king, point out that the sanctuary is also a symbol that cannot be restricted to the Jewish temple. In Daniel 2 and 7 metals and animals are symbols that stand for vast successive empires. Consistently, the *tamid* of Daniel 8:13, 14 is also a symbol. It stands for a reality far broader and richer than the offering of sacrifices twice a day in old Jerusalem.

As a matter of fact, *tamid* doesn't mean "continual burnt offering." *Tamid* means "continual" and is used in this passage to signify a continual something—without expressing what the something is. Translators have sometimes added the term "burnt offering" in an attempt to make the passage fit Antiochus Epiphanes.

Ted's experience and similar experiences of countless other Christians correctly encourage us to look away from Antiochus Epiphanes and to look instead at the symbolic *tamid* of Daniel 8 as representing the *continual*—that is, the all-of-the-time—*high-priestly ministry of Jesus Christ on our behalf in the heavenly sanctuary.*

*The "continualness" of Christ's priestly ministry.* That Jesus is our High Priest is the message of the book of Hebrews in the New Testament. Hebrews 3:1 invites us to "consider Jesus, the apostle and high priest of our confession."

That Jesus ministers *in the heavenly sanctuary* is stated clearly in Hebrews 8:1, 2, which says that "we have such a high priest, one who is seated at the right hand *Jesus, our High Priest, was represented by the high priest in the earthly sanctuary on the Day of Atonement.*



of the throne of the Majesty in heaven, a minister *in the sanctuary* and the true tent [or 'tabernacle,' footnote] which is set up not by man but by the Lord."

And that Jesus ministers on our behalf *continually* is emphasized in Hebrews 7:21-25, where His ministry is contrasted with the noncontinuous ministry of the Old Testament "Levitical" priests:

Those who formerly became [Levitical] priests took their office without an oath, but this one [Jesus Christ] was addressed with an oath,

"The Lord has sworn  
and will not change his mind,  
'Thou art a priest for ever.' "

This makes Jesus the surety of a better covenant.

The former priests were many in number, because they were prevented by death from continuing in office; but he [Jesus] holds his priesthood permanently, because he continues for ever. Consequently he is able for all time to save those who draw near to God through him, since he always lives to make intercession for them. Hebrews 7:21-25.

*Tamid in the Old Testament.* The contrast which is drawn in Hebrews 7:21-25 between Christ's continuing priesthood and the noncontinuing ministry of the Old Testament priests is very much to the point. The Levitical priestly service was intended by God to be *just as continuous as it could humanly be*. In fact, it is in connection with what the Bible says about the continuousness of the Old Testament service that we discover the special meaning of the word *tamid*.

When used as an ordinary adjective, *tamid* describes a variety of things, such as *continual* employment (Ezekiel 39:14), *continual* sorrow (Psalm 38:17), and *continual* hope (Psalm 71:14).

Quite often, however, *tamid* is used in a technical sense to describe various basic aspects of the ritual associated with the Old Testament sanctuary. A dozen times (as in Numbers 28:3 and 1 Chronicles 16:40) it refers to the offering of a lamb, regularly, morning and evening, as a "*continual* burnt offering." It also refers (as in Leviticus 24:2) to the lamps that were kept *continually* burning and (as in 2 Chronicles 2:4) to the "*continual* offering of the showbread" which was kept on display perpetually and was changed weekly. In Exodus 28:29, 30 *tamid* refers to the symbolically adorned breastpiece that the high priest wore *continually*, whenever his duties required him to enter the sanctuary. In 2 Chronicles 24:14 it refers to all the burnt offerings offered to God during a particular king's lifetime. And in 1 Chronicles 23:31 it refers to the special sacrifices offered regularly on Sabbaths, new moons, and feast days.

With this survey in mind, it becomes apparent that *tamid* took into account the entire continuing ministry of the Old Testament sanctuary and was by no means limited to the daily burnt offerings.

*The original Old Testament sanctuary.* To gain a fuller grasp of the Old Testament *tamid*—and through it a better understanding of Christ's heavenly ministry—it is helpful to get acquainted with the Levitical sanctuary and its services.



When God led the Israelites out of Egypt, He said to Moses, "Let them make me a sanctuary, that I may dwell in their midst." Exodus 25:8. On Mount Sinai He gave Moses precise instructions as to the sanctuary's design and rituals (see especially Exodus 25-30).

God's purpose in giving these directions was evidently to impress the people with (1) His holiness in contrast to their sinfulness, (2) His eagerness to forgive their sins in response to repentance, and (3) His desire—through the Holy Spirit—to dwell in and cleanse from sin their individual, personal "temples" (1 Corinthians 6:19, 20; Ephesians 2:21, 22; Revelation 3:20, 21).

Because at the time the Israelites were living like nomads on the Sinai peninsula, God said that the sanctuary should be constructed in the form of a tent, or "tabernacle," so it could be dismantled and moved whenever the people moved. It was to be 10 cubits by 30 (a cubit is about 46 centimeters or 18 inches) and divided into two rooms. The larger room was to be known as the "holy place," and the smaller, inner one, as the "most holy place." Two curtains or "veils" would serve as doors—the inner curtain being gorgeously embroidered with pictures of angels. A "court" surrounding the tabernacle was marked off with a linen fence.

God specified just how the tabernacle was to be furnished. Let's take a tour with Aaron, the high priest. The first item of furniture that he shows us, just inside the entrance to the court, is the large brass-plated "altar of burnt offering." As we walk beyond it, he shows us the brass "laver," a basin with water in it for ceremonial washings.

*The tent-sanctuary, or tabernacle, that God directed Moses to build teaches us much about the heavenly sanctuary.*



We step past the laver, and Aaron draws the first veil aside and leads the way out of the bright desert sun into the reverent dimness of the holy place. The air is fragrant. A fine column of smoke rises from incense burning on the exquisite little "golden altar"<sup>9</sup> directly ahead of us, in front of the second veil. Of course we can barely make it out, until our eyes get used to the place.

Our attention is attracted to the seven-branched "lampstand" on our left, near the south wall. Aaron tells us that it is made of solid gold and that at least some of its lamps are always burning. Now we notice that their light is reflected richly by the gold-plated frames that support the fabric-and-leather walls and roof. Behind the frames hangs a curtain richly decorated with angels.

Next to the north wall is a piece of gold-plated furniture about the size of a coffee table. Aaron says it is the "table of the bread of the Presence" (the "table of shewbread," K.J.V.). Twelve flat loaves, one for each tribe of Israel, are placed on it each Sabbath.

We admire the superb craftsmanship of the inner veil; then Aaron draws aside this second curtain and we enter the most holy place. In its center stands the "ark of the covenant," a gold-plated chest which, Aaron explains, contains the tablets of stone on which God engraved the Ten Commandments. The lid of the ark, called the "mercy seat," he tells us, is made of solid gold. Attached to it and beaten out of the same piece of gold are two angel-like carvings called "cherubim," looking down.

In real life, of course, we could never have entered the tabernacle. Only priests were allowed into the holy place; and only the high priest, one day a year, was allowed to enter the most holy place. Our imagination has served us well!\*

After the Israelites settled in Palestine, the tabernacle became worn and battered. King Solomon replaced it with a stone temple in Jerusalem, based on the same plan as the tabernacle. It was Solomon's temple which Nebuchadnezzar razed to the ground more than three hundred years later.

After the Babylonian exile the Jews built a second temple on the same basic plan and on the same site as Solomon's temple. This second temple did not contain the ark, which was not seen again after Nebuchadnezzar's final attack. Its precincts did, at first, enclose the altar that Antiochus Epiphanes defiled in 168 B.C. Herod the Great, king at the time of Jesus' birth, so rebuilt and beautified this second temple that it came to be known as Herod's temple. Jesus taught in Herod's temple, and the Romans destroyed it in A.D. 70.

*The Old Testament services.* The sanctuary rituals which God required were impressive and varied. They were designed for an agricultural people who lived intimately with herds of cattle and flocks of sheep and goats. They symbolized Christ's death and heavenly ministry for the forgiveness of our sins in terms of the

\*Ordinarily a brilliant, supernatural light which represented the presence of God shone between the cherubim. We made our imaginary tour just before the Israelites moved from one campsite to another in the wilderness, when the light was temporarily removed to permit the priest's Levitical assistants to wrap the furniture for moving. Otherwise the light would have overpowered us (see Genesis 3:24; Exodus 25:22; 1 Timothy 6:16; Exodus 40:34-38; Numbers 3:14-39).

death of valuable animals and the service of dedicated priests.

The basic ritual was the offering of a lamb each morning and evening. According to Leviticus 9:24 God Himself miraculously kindled the altar fire when the tabernacle was originally dedicated, and the priests were under strict instructions never to let it go out. "This is the law of the burnt offering. The burnt offering shall be on the hearth upon the altar all night until the morning, and the fire of the altar shall be kept burning on it. . . . It shall not go out." Leviticus 6:8-13.

Tradition later claimed that the original fire continued to burn from the time of Moses until Nebuchadnezzar destroyed the temple in 586 B.C., a total of over eight hundred years according to biblical chronology.

This continually burning sacrifice said a lot to the Israelites camped in the wilderness. At any moment when anyone felt remorse for his sinfulness, a glance at the tabernacle or at night a sniff of the air could bring reassurance that the sacrifice was in progress on his behalf. And the continuance of the sacrifice would remind him that the other basic functions of the priesthood were being maintained on his behalf also. The lamps were burning day and night, their steady glow reflecting from the gold-plated walls of the tabernacle. The bread was in its place on the golden table. And the high priest, as often at least as he was on duty, was carrying on his breastpiece the name of every tribe in the nation, thus symbolically carrying near his heart and in the presence of God the name of every individual in the encampment.

Later, when the Israelites settled in communities all over Palestine, and still later, when they settled all around the Roman Empire, it became impossible for them to visit the sanctuary every time they sinned or even as often as once a year. Even on the way home from a rare visit to Jerusalem, the worshiper would doubtless sin again and could not possibly return to the altar. But he had the comforting knowledge that the services were continuing on his behalf.

*Behold, the Lamb of God.* It was a lamb that was offered twice a day; and in the New Testament Jesus is often called a lamb, as in John 1:29 and 1 Peter 1:19. Jesus is called the Lamb 27 times in the book of Revelation. Isaiah 53 in the Old Testament speaks of a "lamb that is led to the slaughter," and Acts 8:32-35 in the New Testament applies the statement to Jesus. In 1 Corinthians 5:7 Paul alludes to the lamb sacrificed in the special Passover, or "Paschal," ritual and says, "Christ, our paschal lamb, has been sacrificed."

God did not limit the sacrifices to lambs. Sometimes He called for rams, bulls, calves, kids, and even doves and pigeons. Often "a cereal offering" was specified, as in Leviticus 2:1-11. But always when an animal sacrifice was offered for the forgiveness of sin, the person who offered the sacrifice led his animal to the tabernacle and, standing either at the entrance or beside the altar of burnt offering, laid his hands on the animal and personally took a knife and slew it. *The sinner himself slew the animal*, and the animal was "accepted for him, to make atonement for him." Leviticus 1:3, 4, 10, 11.

By laying his hands on the animal, the sinner symbolically transferred his own

guilt to the innocent victim, and the animal became—in symbol—a substitute for him. As the *Jewish Encyclopedia* says, "The laying of hands upon the victim's head is an ordinary rite by which the substitution and the transfer of sins are effected." "In every sacrifice there is the idea of substitution; the victim takes the place of the human sinner."<sup>10</sup>

When John the Baptist saw Jesus for the first time, he called out to the crowds who had gathered to hear him preach, "Behold, the Lamb of God, *who takes away the sin of the world.*" John 1:29. Years later Peter wrote in his first epistle, "He himself bore our sins in his body." 1 Peter 2:24.

The requirement that the sinner himself slay his substitute animal teaches a profound lesson that we still need to be reminded of. Every one of us can say, "If Christ died as my Substitute because He bore my sins, then it is my responsibility that He died. It is I who slew Christ."

For guilt of my sin the nail drove in,  
When Him they crucified.<sup>11</sup>

And, of course, the sacrifice *died*. Every animal that died every day in every ritual gave its life to teach all of us the solemn truth that "the wages of sin is death." Romans 6:23. Sin causes death. Sin causes death so irrevocably and inevitably that God cannot merely overlook it. It has cost God something to forgive our sins. God "did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all." Romans 8:32. "God so loved . . . that he gave his only Son." John 3:16.

*The cross in the Old Testament.* God required the Levitical priests to perform a variety of rituals, for the reason that no single routine could adequately convey all the fullness of the gospel. Jesus, for example, could serve both as our Lamb and as our High Priest, because He returned to life after the crucifixion. No lamb or

*The confession of sin on the head of a sacrificial lamb teaches us to lay our guilt on Jesus, our sacrificial Lamb.*



bull or goat could illustrate the resurrection! Thus an animal *and* a human priest were required, and the animals were used in different ways at different times.

As a part of this variety the sacrifice was sometimes burned outside the camp instead of on the altar at the sanctuary. Hebrews 13:12, 13 reminds us that "Jesus also suffered outside the gate in order to sanctify the people through his own blood." Calvary, where Jesus died, was located outside Jerusalem. As a regular site for executions, it was a place of reproach—symbolic of the reproach that a person sometimes suffers who follows Jesus as a true disciple. Christian youth in high school know what this reproach is. So do husbands, wives, and close friends who suddenly decide to walk closer than before with their Lord. Hebrews 13:13 encourages us: "Therefore let us go forth to him outside the camp, bearing abuse for him."

*The blood had to be applied.* In the variety of rituals some of the blood from every sacrifice made for sin was sprinkled on or near one of the two altars. "It is the blood that makes atonement," says Leviticus 17:11. When the priest offered a sacrifice for himself, he took some of the animal's blood and sprinkled it on the golden altar in the holy place and on the floor in front of the inner curtain. By doing this he registered in the holy place a record of his *confessed and forgiven* sin (see Leviticus 4:2-6).

For obvious reasons blood from all the sacrifices could not possibly have been sprinkled in the holy place; so when the common people brought their sacrifices, God said for the priest to sprinkle some of the animal's blood on the large altar in the court. Then the priest was to cook a portion of the animal and eat it. In this way the priest, like Jesus—only symbolically of course—bore the "iniquity of the congregation" in his own body. Leviticus 10:17. When the priest again offered a sacrifice for himself, he carried into the holy place blood that now represented the people's sins as well as his own. Thus in one way or another a record of everyone's *confessed and forgiven* sins was preserved in the holy place.

It is of utmost importance to emphasize that forgiveness or "atonement" was not effected without both the *shedding* and the *application* of the blood. "Without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sins," says Hebrews 9:22. Shedding of blood, however, was not enough. Some of the blood had to be applied to one of the altars by one of the priests in order for the symbolic ritual to be complete. In some cases *only* the applied blood is referred to, as in Exodus 30:10.

Many Christians overlook this fact. They speak gratefully about the act of salvation on the cross and about the blood which Jesus shed there, but they stop short and do not mention that in some sense Jesus had to "take blood" with Him into the heavenly sanctuary (Hebrews 9:12) in order to care adequately for our sins.

Many Christians think that Jesus only *died* in order to provide justification by faith. Romans 4:25, however, says that He was "put to death for our trespasses *and raised for our justification.*" Romans 5:10 says that "if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his son, much more, now that we are

reconciled, shall we be *saved by his life*."

Hebrews 9:12 says that "he entered once for all into the Holy Place, taking . . . his own blood, *thus* securing an eternal redemption.

So the high-priestly ministry of Jesus Christ in the heavenly sanctuary is as vital to our salvation as was His death on the cross.

Indeed, to ask which is more important for our salvation—Christ's death on the cross or His living ministry in heaven—is almost like asking, "Which is more important to the success of a jet plane: its engines or its wings?" Engines and wings are both important in different ways, but both are absolutely, fundamentally, and irreplaceably essential.

Fully as essential as the cross is Christ's continual ministry, His *tamid*, in heaven.

*The superiority of Christ's tamid.* Even though the symbolism of the Levitical ministry provided rich reassurance and spiritual insight, it had no real value in itself. That is, it is obviously "impossible that the blood of bulls and goats should take away sins"! Hebrews 10:4.

So the book of Hebrews traces Christ's superiority. Jesus is better, it says, than any Old Testament priest. Hebrews 7:11-16. Jesus is better than Moses, through whom God revealed the ritual. Hebrews 3. And He is better than the angels who assist in our salvation. Hebrews 1. Jesus offers better promises, a better covenant, and a better hope. Hebrews 8:6; 7:19. He serves in a better tabernacle. Hebrews 9:11. And He offered an immeasurably superior sacrifice. "Sacrifices and offerings thou hast not desired," He said to His Father as He came into the world, "but a body hast thou prepared for me." Hebrews 10:5.

And because Christ's sacrifice is immeasurably superior to the death of bulls and goats, *it does not need to be repeated*. Hebrews 9:25-28 is emphatic: "Nor was it [necessary] to offer himself repeatedly, . . . But . . . he has appeared once for all . . . to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself. And just as it is appointed for men to die once, and after that comes judgment, so Christ, having been offered once to bear the sins of many, will appear a second time, not to deal with sin but to save those who are eagerly waiting for him."

Because Christ does not die again, either sacrificially or from old age, His priesthood is marked by an immeasurable superiority in its *continual-ness*. As we read several pages back, "The former priests were many in number, because they were prevented by death from continuing in office; but he holds his priesthood permanently, because he continues for ever." Hebrews 7:23, 24.

Thus Jesus "is also able to save absolutely those who approach God through him; he is always living to plead on their behalf." Hebrews 7:24, N.E.B.

*Christ and the New Covenant.* We read a moment ago that Jesus offers a "better covenant." Hebrews 7:22.

This better covenant, otherwise known as the new covenant (Hebrews 8:10-12; Jeremiah 31:31-34), is the gospel in a nugget. God promised it first to Adam after he sinned (see Genesis 3:15). He repeated it several times in the Old Testa-

ment using different words. It was ratified by Christ's death on the cross, and it is administered as an essential aspect of Christ's continuing priesthood.

Jeremiah and Ezekiel, Daniel's contemporary prophets, wrote about the new covenant several times. They showed that it offered three absolutely priceless gifts: (1) forgiveness of every sin, (2) power to live a changed life, and (3) membership among God's chosen people. Ezekiel expressed it once this way:

- (1) I will sprinkle clean water upon you,  
and you shall be clean from all your uncleannesses. . . .
- (2) A new heart I will give you,  
and a new spirit will I put within you. . . .
- (3) You shall be my people,  
and I will be your God.  
Ezekiel 36:25-28.

Jeremiah arranged the same elements in this manner:

- (2) I will put my law within them  
and I will write it upon their hearts;
- (3) And I will be their God,  
and they shall be my people. . . .
- (1) For I will forgive their iniquity,  
and I will remember their sin no more.  
Jeremiah 31:33-34.

The promise of new hearts with God's laws written on them reminds us that Jesus summarized the Ten Commandments as loving God with all our hearts and as loving our neighbors (good and bad) as much as we love ourselves (see Matthew 22:37-40).

When God asks us to love like this, He doesn't stand and bark orders like a drill sergeant. He offers to *give* us His kind of love. He cares!

And when we feel God's love astir inside us, it is much easier for us to treat our employees honestly, our competitors fairly, our parents honorably, and our spouses faithfully! When we love God because He inspires in us His own kind of love, we *want* to pray to Him and read and talk about Him. And we want to keep His Sabbath, because the Sabbath is His day—a special occasion for a rewarding relationship with so close a Friend.

It is a vital part of Christ's ongoing *tamid* ministry to change us, from the inside out. To help us to love things that are good for us and to love people who are bad to us. To help us become the kind of Christian that He was when He lived on earth.

*The tamid of Daniel 8.* The manifold superiority of Christ's continual priesthood—the reality of which the *tamid* of Daniel 8 is a symbol—is presented in Hebrews as providing a solid foundation for living faith. Inasmuch, then, as “we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of

God, let us hold fast our confession. . . . Let us . . . with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need." Hebrews 4:14-16.

It is sad that some of the Jews, perhaps a majority of them, in Christ's day thought that their Levitical ritual was the true *tamid*, the ultimate expression of God's continuing concern for sinners. They did not look beyond the symbol to the reality. They did not discern that the lamb was but a shadow of the Lamb of God.

It is even more sad, in its own way, for anyone to suppose that the Old Testament ritual was the *tamid* about which God spoke in the grand prophecy of Daniel 8. Without a doubt the Old Testament *tamid* was important to God. He instituted it, and He was concerned that Antiochus Epiphanes would interrupt it briefly and that the Roman Empire would contribute to its demise.

But like the metals, beasts, and horns of Daniel's prophecies, which are symbols of empires and kingdoms, so the *tamid* of Daniel 8:13, 14 is a symbol. It is a symbol of the continual ministry of Jesus Christ in the heavenly sanctuary, forgiving our sins and providing power for us to live changed lives in fulfillment of the new covenant promises.

On a back porch one bleak morning nineteen hundred years *after* the Romans burned Herod's temple to the ground, it was Christ's *continuing* heavenly ministry and the words of His glorious new covenant that comforted my friend Ted.

#### IV. Christ's Priesthood Obscured

We asked ourselves several pages back (page 155) whether in any sense *Christian* Rome trampled on the continual ministry, the *tamid*, of Jesus Christ in the heavenly sanctuary.

For one answer to this vital question, we turn to the doctrinal decisions of the epochal Council of Trent. The Council of Trent (1545-1563) was convened to deal specifically with the Reformation started by Martin Luther. This council achieved a variety of ecclesiastical reforms and is considered a major element in the Catholic Counter-Reformation. But after lengthy debates on doctrine it voted to retain intact *almost all the basic traditional teachings of medieval Christendom*.

The doctrinal decisions of the Council of Trent are embodied in the popular Baltimore Catechism.<sup>12</sup> And because the Baltimore Catechism is readily available *and* is based on the Council of Trent, it provides convenient access to the traditional teachings of Christian Rome. Study of this catechism can help us answer our question.

Protestants who pick up a Baltimore Catechism for the first time are surprised to discover sensitive paragraphs describing Christian doctrines which they believe equally with their Catholic neighbors. They also discover teachings which some Christians have objected to since long before the Reformation.

Christians in the fifteenth century (for example) were taught to believe that if they hoped for forgiveness of mortal sins—sins like murder and staying home from mass—they had to confess them to an authorized priest, normally in a confes-



sional booth, and they had to perform every act of penance assigned to them after confession.—Baltimore Catechism, sec. 384, 408.

They were taught that at the Lord's Supper the "substance" of the bread undergoes a change, or "transubstantiation," into the body and blood of Christ<sup>13</sup> and that believers do not need to drink the wine as well as the bread because Christ's body *and* blood are "entirely present under the appearance of the bread" alone. They were taught that the mass is the "same sacrifice as the sacrifice of the cross," although in the mass there is no pain and—even though Christ's blood is present—the sacrifice is "unbloody."—Baltimore Catechism, sec. 350, 359, 360, 362.

Christians in the Middle Ages were taught that at death God assigns unrepentant sinners to hell, to writhe there forever with the devils in flames. Even repentant sinners are assigned by God at death to a place called purgatory, to suffer for unknown but often very extensive periods in preparation for heaven. Masses for souls in purgatory can be performed at the request of the living and serve to reduce their sufferings.—Baltimore Catechism, sec. 173, 184, 185.

They were also taught that the pope is the "supreme head" of the church, invested, as the vicar of Christ and successor of Peter, with full power to rule the church like a king.—Baltimore Catechism, sec. 137, 148, 162.

*Changes since the Second Vatican Council.* All of these beliefs, now many centuries old, have persisted in the Catholic Church until recent times. Since the second Vatican Council (1962-1965), however, thousands of Catholics have been asking whether they were ever really true. The controversial Dutch Catechism has concluded that at least some of them were not true. In its pages purgatory appears more as an experience than as a place, and the time required for a soul to spend in purgatory is reduced in some cases to as little as "months."<sup>14</sup> Hell, in the same book, no longer burns with literal flames but only with "dismay" at the recognition of one's "total perversion" and with the "inner remorse" sensed by an obstinate rebel in the presence of the "tender warmth of God's love."<sup>15</sup>

Catholics reading the Bible, as the Catholic Church now encourages them to do, are finding that the Bible nowhere says that masses benefit people in purgatory, that in fact, the Bible nowhere mentions purgatory. Neither does it call the eucharist a "sacrifice." The Bible calls it a "supper" (1 Corinthians 11:20) and portrays it as being eaten, not offered; and as being shared at the "table of the Lord" (1 Corinthians 10:21), never at an altar.

Catholics are finding that the Bible nowhere says that we must confess our sins to a priest. It says only that we must confess our sins and forsake them. 1 John 1:9; Proverbs 28:13. Through the Lord's Prayer the Bible teaches us to seek pardon directly from our Father in heaven. Matthew 6:12. The Bible does not require us to recite many "Our Fathers" and "Hail Marys," and it does warn against the danger inherent in repetitious prayer. Matthew 6:7.

Catholics are finding, also, that the Bible says that "Christ is *the* head of the church" (Ephesians 5:23); He is not one of the heads. The Bible nowhere says that

the pope is the head of the church, not even its visible head.

Professor McKenzie, our friendly Jesuit at the University of Notre Dame (see page 122), unabashedly acknowledges that in justifying its official teachings about the authority of the pope, the Catholic Church does "not . . . claim that one can find in the New Testament, a statement of the same power in other words," or "that Peter thought of his own office in terms substantially identical [to the office of the pope]," or even that it can be proved, historically, that the pope really is the successor of Peter.<sup>16</sup>

And in view of the fact that "the New Testament is so explicit about both the bread and the wine," and in light of the fact that the use of both bread and wine by the laity "was certainly the most ancient practice," Professor McKenzie also says that "it is an obvious question . . . why Roman Catholics do not receive communion under both species." He admits wryly that if use of the wine were restored to Catholic worship, "no Roman Catholic who knows some of his history could feel entirely comfortable if the Roman Church adopted a liturgical practice for which it burnt John Hus[s] at Constance"; but he goes on to observe that at the present time "there is a serious movement within Roman Catholicism to restore the original sign in its integrity."<sup>17</sup>

The hints here that the Catholic Church may have erred in various ways, such as by withholding the wine and in burning John Huss, are especially troublesome to Roman Catholics, for their church teaches that

it is unthinkable that an institution established by God for the salvation of souls could lead men into error and turn them away from God. If the Church could and did err in matters of faith or morals, it would not be a true teacher; it would fail in its ministry of sanctification and would not lead men to salvation but would be responsible for their condemnation.—Baltimore Catechism, sec. 163.

Catholics believe many things not found in the Bible on the simple basis that the Church teaches them and the Church cannot be wrong. But supposing the Church has been wrong?

Virtually all Christians in all the world, other than Roman Catholics, offer the wine to the laity. The Catholic Church itself offered the wine until about the twelfth century, and it is contemplating doing so again. Inasmuch as Jesus said "Drink of it, *all of you*" (Matthew 26:27), has it been wrong for the church to withhold the wine from millions of believers for so many years? Was it wrong for the Church to kill John Huss because he served it to his followers?

And if the Catholic Church can be wrong about the wine, is it possible that during mass the bread doesn't turn into the body of Christ? Was the church in error when it actually burned Wycliffe's followers because they insisted that the bread did not undergo such a change? Are Catholics, even today, wrong when they pray and sing hymns to the "reserved host" (the consecrated bread that is left over) in its golden tabernacle hanging in the church? Are they unwittingly worshipping a consecrated piece of bread?

If the church can be wrong, is it possible that it erred seriously in killing Lutherans when they insisted, among other matters, that it was not necessary to confess their sins to a priest and do penance?

Was the church wrong when it forbade people to keep the Sabbath on the seventh day of the week as taught in the Ten Commandments and said instead that they must observe Sunday, the first day of the week?

Is it any wonder that Catholics today face wrenching decisions? Is it any wonder that many of them are wandering away from all religion and that not a few are becoming Protestants?

When Catholics become Protestants under these searching circumstances, it is observed that they often make more dedicated Protestants than people born into Protestant homes.

*Doubtful tradition and good motivation.* Protestants need not suppose that covens of wizard bishops closeted themselves with the devil from time to time and deliberately concocted doctrines that couldn't be found in the Bible! Medieval Christian traditions may be said rather to have evolved from a gene pool of very defensible motivation.

We have already seen (pages 130-133) that many Christians in the second century abandoned the Sabbath of the Bible because the Jews seemed to keep it badly and because Sunday seemed to offer a more desirable memorial of Christ's death and resurrection.

The tradition that priests have the power to forgive sins developed in the third century after large numbers of church members apostatized in A.D. 250 during the short but sharp Decian persecution. A group of very strict bishops (the Novatianists) insisted that the apostates had sinned so mortally that they could never be forgiven. Other bishops, however, offered forgiveness to any apostate who confessed to them, in order to demonstrate that God forgives all contrite sinners.

Penance was also introduced about this same time—for the purpose of helping people not to take their mortal sins lightly. Penance at first consisted of standing conspicuously outside the church at meeting time for a number of years, then inside the church for several more years, and so on. When such rigorous penance proved counterproductive and people reasoned that they might as well be hanged for a sheep as for a lamb, less onerous options were offered, such as payments in cash and military service on a crusade. By this time an additional motive was at work. Profits from the sale of pardons and indulgences could be used to build beautiful churches to the glory of God.

When the wine at Communion came to be viewed as being the "blood of God," priests around the twelfth century stopped serving it to the laity for the excellent reason that no one wanted to commit the sacrilege of accidentally spilling God on the floor.

In the thirteenth century officers of the papal Inquisition who handed heretics to the state to be burned did so on the allegedly merciful basis that if sinners

suffered a short time in flames in this life, they would be spared far worse suffering in flames after death.

Doubtful traditions *can* develop from defensible motives. Jesus fully recognized the possibility of doing wrong for good reasons when He said, "The hour is coming when whoever kills you will think that he is offering service to God." John 16:2.

Addressing religious leaders, Jesus also remarked once, frighteningly and with more than a trace of irony, "You have a fine way of rejecting the commandment of God, in order to keep your tradition!" Mark 7:9. More plainly, on the same occasion He branded worship that is based on mere human authority as "vain" or useless. Mark 7:7.

*Religion at the grass roots.* Whatever the quality of a church's official teachings, there is usually a gap between what theologians write and what ordinary pastors and people believe and practice. Is there evidence that Christian Rome, during the long Middle Ages, did in fact separate church members from the continual priestly ministry, the *tamid* of Jesus Christ in the heavenly sanctuary? Did the church actually obscure the truth about His forgiveness and about His desire, through the Holy Spirit, to dwell victoriously in our hearts by faith?

The sad fact appears to be that in many medieval pulpits the gospel of Jesus Christ was hardly ever preached; indeed, that there were hardly any sermons on any subject. It was considered a reform measure when Archbishop Peckham in 1281 asked his priests to preach at least four times a year!<sup>18</sup> And when the priests did preach, their messages tended to consist of fantastic miracle stories and of shocking illustrations of the seven deadly sins. As a natural consequence people tended to step outside the church during the sermon and to return only in time for the consecration of the bread during the ceremony of the mass. If they stayed inside for the sermon, they often acted indifferently or chatted with one another. Sometimes they played chess.<sup>19</sup>

With the people deprived, to a large extent, of the truth about Jesus Christ, it is little wonder that in the late Middle Ages traveling "pardoners" enjoyed great success—and occasioned great scandal. A pardoner was a kind of monk or friar who had received special authorization from the pope to hear confession and forgive sin for a fee. Pardoners did in actual fact hawk forgiveness;<sup>20</sup> and because they were allowed to keep part of the fee as their commission, they tended to forgive people who were not truly repentant. Drunks and fornicators loved them, but more thoughtful people took a different view. More than a century before Luther's birth, Geoffrey Chaucer, William Langland, and John Wycliffe denounced the pardoners as being opposed to true religion. Langland, in *Piers Plowman*, described them as "big loafers" who swarmed over the land with their bags and bellies full, hearing confession and forgiving any sinner for a price.<sup>21</sup>

A grotesque competition developed between the lenient, itinerant pardoners and the local parish priests. More than once a pardoner wrestled physically with a priest for the use of the priest's pulpit. Losing the contest, the pardoner might step

to the back of the church and "preach" anyway, advertising his cheap indulgences and destroying the worship service.

But if the people were left unfed by the priest's preaching and were deceived by the pardoner's commercialized grace, they were also misled by the mass.

The priest stepped deep into the apse. He turned his back. He murmured in an unknown tongue. And when he rang his little bell and spoke the mystic phrase, "*Hoc est corpus meum*" ("This is my body," in Latin), the people believed that he begot Christ on the altar as surely as the virgin Mary gave Him birth in old Bethlehem. To exceptional, pious souls Communion constituted a moment of sweet consolation and of fellowship with the Crucified, but for the majority, attendance at mass was a kind of salvation by magic, an easy if irksome way to avoid untold years of agony in the flames of purgatory. Awareness that the real Christ was *alive*, ministering forgiveness in the heavenly sanctuary and longing to dwell victoriously—through the Holy Spirit—in people's hearts, was most certainly obscured.

All was not bad, however. Think of St. Francis and his love for the poor. Think of John Colet preaching on the epistles of Paul in Oxford and London. Think of Catholic missionary graves, numerous even before the sixteenth century.

Toward the end of the Middle Ages tracts were published to teach ordinary people what to say to someone who was dying. *Ars moriendi*, they were called: "On the Art of Dying." They taught the layfolk, in the absence of a priest, to encourage a dying person to believe in Jesus Christ as his personal Saviour—every ugly, tormenting doubt, appearance, and demon to the contrary notwithstanding. Even if God Himself should speak of wrath and judgment, the dying person should be encouraged to reply, "O God, I interpose between my sin and Thee the death of Jesus Christ."

All was not bad. But things were tragically far from what they should have



been. Prophecy purposely pointed to the dark side to show us God's concern for people and for their relationship to the ministry of our Lord in heaven.

Jesuit professor Robert E. McNally of Fordham University acknowledges that "the indulgence practice [of the pardoners] was an abuse which could and should have been corrected by ecclesiastical authority."<sup>22</sup> Indeed he emphasizes that "the old Church needed renewal and reform on all levels—morals, theology, spirituality, liturgy, and structure."

Both Protestants and modern Catholics alike can be pleased that earnest voices within the medieval church demanded change. "The question of Church reform was a burning question even a century before Luther," McNally continues. "The history of the period is filled with futile attempts on the part of good, discerning, capable, even saintly men, to reform the Church."<sup>23</sup> Luther, a devout and talented monk, provided a partial answer, McNally adds; but further reform—of both Catholicism and Protestantism—is needed still today.

*Christian Rome and the tamid of Daniel 8.* We have seen in earlier pages that pagan Rome "**magnified itself . . . up to the Prince of the host,**" destroyed "**the people of the saints,**" and in a limited sense overthrew the "**sanctuary**" and took away the "**tamid.**" It did these things when it crucified Jesus, persecuted Christians, demolished Herod's temple, and terminated the Old Testament ritual.

The medieval church assumed many of Christ's prerogatives as Prince of the host and obscured His high-priestly ministry in the heavenly sanctuary. It did so:

1. *By insisting on the pope's absolute kingship as the visible head of the church,* and persecuting people who said that the only head of the church is Jesus Christ. Ephesians 4:15; 5:23.

2. *By presenting the Lord's Supper in a manner that encouraged superstition,* and persecuting people (like the followers of John Wycliffe) who refused to teach that the bread turns into the actual body of Jesus.

3. *By withholding the wine at communion,* and persecuting people (like the Hussites) who requested the wine as a symbol of the new covenant in Christ's blood. Matthew 26:27, 28.

4. *By failing to preach the Word of God,* and burning at the stake people (like William Tyndale) who labored to make the Bible accessible to common people.

5. *By authorizing the purchase of pardons,* and excommunicating people (like Martin Luther) who said that justification is by grace alone through faith in Jesus Christ. Romans 3:24; Ephesians 2:5.

6. *By requiring confession to a priest and the performance of penance,* and persecuting people (like the Lutherans) who said that every Christian is a priest who can go directly to God through one Mediator, Jesus Christ. 1 Peter 2:9; 1 Timothy 2:5.

7. *By requiring that the first day of the week be observed in place of the seventh day,* even though God in the new covenant promised to write His law on people's hearts. Exodus 20:8-11; Hebrews 8:10-12.

These errors reflected the temper of the times. Today we live in a new time.

Thank God, the promise of Daniel 8 is that in our day Christ's high-priestly ministry. His *tamid*, is once more to become triumphantly available to all people.

## V. Christ's Ministry Triumphant

Everything we have said so far about Daniel 8 has helped prepare us for our discussion of Daniel 8:14, the verse which has been called the peak and focus of the entire book.

In response to an anxious question about how long the priestly ministry (the *tamid*) would be trampled underfoot, the angel Gabriel replied, **"For\* two thousand and three hundred evenings and mornings; then shall the sanctuary be restored to its rightful state."**

What enigmatic words—and how intriguing!

And we absolutely must remember that this verse is located in the *symbolic* portion of Daniel 8. The **"sanctuary"** and the **"evenings and mornings"** are no more literal than are the beasts and horns!

After Daniel looked at the beasts and horns and heard the prediction about the evenings and mornings and about the sanctuary, he naturally desired an explanation. Gabriel started to provide one, but what he said about the beasts and horns and their effect on Christ's heavenly ministry and on the people of God so overwhelmed Daniel that he fainted before Gabriel could deal specifically with verse 14.

Gabriel had been commissioned to **"make this man understand the vision."** True to his trust, he returned in Daniel 9 with an explanation of the evenings and mornings, which we shall study carefully in due course. Even so he did get in a few hints in Daniel 8. He said that the vision as a whole extended **"to the appointed time of the end"** (Daniel 8:19) and that **"it pertains to many days hence"** (verse 26). Thus he directed Daniel's (and our) attention to a restoration of the sanctuary *at the end of time*.

*The "evenings and mornings" are days.* In addition, we can discern from Daniel 8:14 itself that the 2300 evenings and mornings are really 2300 days. (They are *symbolic* days, of course. Just as the beasts stand for empires and the *tamid* symbolizes Christ's heavenly ministry, so the 2300 days of Daniel 8:14 are symbols that stand for 2300 years [see pages 230-232].)

Some commentators have interpreted the 2300 evenings and mornings to be only 1150 (literal) days. They explain that they have done this to make them fit as closely as possible to the three years and ten days that the temple was desecrated under Antiochus Epiphanes, and that they have assumed the phrase "evenings and mornings" to be an idiomatic abbreviation referring to the regular morning and evening burnt offerings which Antiochus Epiphanes interrupted.

For several reasons, however, 2300 is preferable to 1150. These reasons include the following:

\*The Hebrew is literally "until," as in the Jerusalem Bible.

1. Even 1150 days *cannot* be fitted meaningfully into the experience of the Jews under Antiochus Epiphanes (see pages 183-186).

2. The expression “**evenings and mornings**” (literally, in Hebrew, “evening-morning”) *cannot* be applied to the daily burnt offerings. In the sanctuary ritual special sacrifices were indeed offered twice a day, as we have seen (page 161), but they were never referred to as “evening and morning” sacrifices. They were always referred to as being offered “morning and evening.” For example, “They offered to the Lord every morning and evening.” 2 Chronicles 13:11. “The burnt offerings of morning and evening.” 2 Chronicles 31:3. “Burnt offerings morning and evening.” Ezra 3:3 (see also Numbers 28:4 and 2 Chronicles 2:4). In other words, it simply would not have occurred to a Jew to think of the daily sacrifices as “evening and morning” events.

3. On the other hand, the sequence “evening, morning” does occur in the Bible—not in connection with the daily burnt offerings, but in connection with the days of Creation. “There was evening and there was morning, one day,” says Genesis 1:5. “There was evening and there was morning, a second day,” adds Genesis 1:8. And so on. Jewish days were conceived to commence at sunset and continue to the following sunset. Thus the Sabbath began and ended at sunset (compare Leviticus 23:32 with Mark 1:32). A vestige of this practice is the contemporary custom of celebrating Christmas Eve *before* Christmas Day.

4. The Jewish scholars who prepared both of the principal ancient Greek versions of the Old Testament<sup>24</sup> did in fact understand the 2300 evenings and mornings to be 2300 days. Their translations both provide (in Greek, of course) “days of evening and morning, twenty-three hundred.”

Carl F. Keil, who edited the widely used Keil and Delitzsch commentary more than a hundred years ago, was on firm ground when he wrote:<sup>25</sup>

When the Hebrews wish to express separately day and night, the component parts of a day of a week, then the number of both is expressed. They say, e.g., forty days and forty nights (Gen vii:4, 12; Ex xxiv:18; 1 Kings xix:8), and three days and three nights (Jonah i:17; Matt xii:40), but not eighty or six days-and-nights, when they wish to speak of forty or three full days. A Hebrew reader could not possibly understand the period of time 2300 evening-mornings of 2300 half days or 1150 whole days, because evening and morning at the creation constituted not the half but the whole day. . . . We must therefore take the words as they are, *i.e.*, understand them of 2300 whole days.

Christian writers have perceived the “2300 evenings and mornings” to be 2300 days since at least the thirteenth century. Recent commentators who have drawn the same conclusion include Edward J. Young,<sup>26</sup> John F. Walvoord,<sup>27</sup> Leon Wood,<sup>28</sup> and S. J. Schwantes.<sup>29</sup>

*Restored, victorious, or cleansed?* Leaving further discussion of the time question until we get to Daniel 9, we turn to the “restoration of the sanctuary”—only to discover that Gabriel provided no specific explanation of it anywhere in the book.



Inasmuch as he had been told to **"make this man understand the vision,"** the conclusion is unmistakable that sufficient general information must be available in the Bible as a whole so that the term can be understood without additional specific interpretation.

When we look at the clause **"Then the sanctuary shall be restored to its rightful state,"** we find that translations vary widely. Today's English Version has "Then the Temple will be restored," which is fairly close to the R.S.V.; but The New English Bible has "Then the Holy Place shall emerge victorious." Monsignor Knox has "Ere the sanctuary is cleansed," and the K.J.V., at this point rather similar to Knox, provides "Then shall the sanctuary be cleansed."

The differences are occasioned in part by the fact that Gabriel spoke to Daniel in Hebrew, not English; and he said in Hebrew, "Then shall the sanctuary be *nitsdaq*," employing a word which occurs *only this one time* in the entire Hebrew part of the Bible.

Scholars know that *nitsdaq* is related to another Hebrew word, *tsadaq*, which is a rather common term. *Tsadaq* occurs in its various forms more than 250 times in the Bible and is normally translated into the English word, "righteousness." It is also translated into "to be righteous," "to be just" (in the Latin sense of "being righteous"), and "to justify" (meaning "to make something right" or "to make it appear to be right").

A literal translation of Daniel 8:14 quite possibly ought to be "Then shall the sanctuary be made righteous."

But the sanctuary is a building, and neither in English nor in Hebrew are buildings ordinarily made righteous! So some translators have struggled with the alternate words, "justified" and "just"; and when these haven't seemed to help much, they have tried synonyms and come up with "vindicate" and even "emerge victorious."

The editors of Today's English Version were quite sure that Daniel 8:14 refers to the restoration of the Jewish temple after its desecration by Antiochus Epiphanes. They translated *nitsdaq* with "restored" so as to make it fit their idea. But we have already seen that the rest of the chapter cannot possibly fit Antiochus Epiphanes; so it isn't helpful to compel this passage to do so.

Gabriel knew that Daniel could understand the passage without specific interpretation; so now we want to know *how other Jews who lived long ago* understood it. We are fascinated to discover that in both of the translations that were made into Greek in ancient times by Jewish scholars, the word *nitsdaq* is translated by an ordinary word meaning "cleansed," the same meaning as in the K.J.V. and in Monsignor Knox's version. Further, when the celebrated Christian scholar, Jerome, translated the passage into Latin around the year A.D. 400, after holding extensive conversations with a Jewish rabbi in regard to Old Testament idioms, he chose the Latin word that also means "cleansed."

*The cleansing of the sanctuary.* With this information from Jewish authorities before us, we begin to climb onto solid ground; for the annual highlight of the Old

Testament sanctuary ritual was a solemn ceremony in which the sanctuary was symbolically *cleansed*!

The day on which the sanctuary was cleansed is called in the R.S.V. and the K.J.V. the "day of atonement." It is well known even to nonreaders of the Bible by its Hebrew name, Yom Kippur.

Yom Kippur was and still is observed on the tenth day of the seventh month of the traditional Jewish year, a date that coincides roughly with the month of October. In Bible times the "day of atonement" was the most portentous day in the religious calendar. It was the only day when the high priest was permitted to enter the most holy place, the innermost compartment of the sanctuary.

As we saw on pages 161-164, when the people offered their personal sacrifices day by day, they placed their hands on their animals to transfer their guilt symbolically and then slew the animals as their symbolic substitutes. Subsequently, the priest made a record of their confessed *and forgiven* sins (Leviticus 4:20) by applying blood—immediately or later—to the golden altar in the holy place and to the floor nearby, in front of the inner veil.

Sin is so heinous that even the record of confessed sin contaminated the sanctuary. Thus on the Day of Atonement a unique ceremony was performed in order to cleanse it. The high priest was told that "he shall make atonement for the holy place, *because of the uncleannesses* of the people of Israel, and because of their transgressions, *all their sins*; and so he shall do for the tent of meeting, which abides with them in the midst of their *uncleannesses*." Leviticus 16:16. Because this unique cleansing was not an ordinary housekeeping routine but was a cleansing from sin—that is, from unrighteousness—the cleansing was in fact a restoration to righteousness. Gabriel's use of *nitsdaq*, a unique form of the verb "to make righteous," is seen to be highly appropriate. Viewed in *this* light, the R.S.V. is correct when it uses the phrase, "restored to its rightful state."

According to Leviticus 16, on the Day of Atonement the high priest cast lots over two carefully selected goats in order to distinguish the "Lord's goat" from the "scapegoat" (K.J.V.). He then slew the Lord's goat and carried some of its blood through the holy place into the most holy place, where he sprinkled it on the floor in front of the ark of the covenant and on the ark itself. (It is helpful to notice that Leviticus 16 calls the most holy place simply the "holy place" and calls the sanctuary as a whole the "tent of meeting.")

In the original tabernacle a brilliant, supernatural light—later known as the "shekinah"—shone above the ark as a symbol of the presence of God (see page 160). It was a solemn moment when the high priest drew aside the inner veil and stepped into God's presence!

*The gospel and the Day of Atonement.* On no other day of the year was the gospel so fully proclaimed in the temple ritual. The Day of Atonement started, as did every other day, with the sacrifice of the lamb that symbolized the Lamb of God. As on every other day the "bread of the Presence" in the holy place represented Jesus, the Bread of Life. John 6:35. The seven-branched lampstand represented

Jesus, the Light of the world. John 8:12. And the priests represented Christ in His heavenly ministry. But in addition to these regular features, on the Day of Atonement blood that represented the blood of Christ was applied directly, in the presence of God, to the ark containing the Ten Commandments. This blood served as an impressive symbol of the price that our sins have cost and which Jesus has been willing to pay. Specifically, the blood was applied to the golden lid of the ark, the "mercy seat." God Himself provided the place, in His own presence, where sins could be forgiven.

The fact that on the Day of Atonement the high priest stepped into God's presence to atone for sin points up the personal nature of sin and its atonement. When we sin, we sin against God. When we seek forgiveness, we seek it through His Son. By faith we enter together with the Son into the presence of the Father. And when we do this, we find that the Father has been waiting to receive us. He has already prepared a "mercy seat."

The Day of Atonement provided persuasive evidence that God is not a tyrant. He hates sin, but He loves sinners, and He longs to lead us to repentance so He can forgive us. As Paul wrote in 2 Corinthians 5:19, "*In Christ God was reconciling the world to himself.*" The word "reconcile" is a synonym for "atone." On the Day of Atonement, God revealed Himself as a person who is busy "at-one-ing" people—reconciling people—to Himself.

Having applied the blood in the most holy place, the high priest passed back out of the sanctuary, on the way applying blood to the golden altar in the holy place and to the altar of burnt offering in the court. During the year both altars had been sprinkled with blood representing confessed sin.

Thus, says the Bible, he "made an end of atoning for the holy place [that is, for the most holy place] and the tent of meeting [that is, the sanctuary as a whole] and the altar." Leviticus 16:20.

After he had *finished* making the atonement for the entire sanctuary, the high priest laid his hands on the live goat, which was then led to an uninhabited area in the wilderness and allowed to escape (hence the name, "scapegoat").

*The people's part.* It is most important to learn that the people of Israel were expected to become deeply involved in the religious meaning of the Day of Atonement.

To alert the Israelites to the great day just ahead, the priests summoned them to *Trumpets on Rosh Hashanah (New Year's Day) announced the soon arrival of the Day of Atonement/Day of Judgment.*



a sacred meeting on the *first* day of the seventh month (Rosh Hashanah) by blowing an alarm on their long, straight, silver trumpets.<sup>30</sup> Leviticus 23:23-25; Numbers 10:1-10. These trumpets seem always to have been used in pairs. As their mellow tones rose, clear as sunbeams, above the noisiness of a community, the children no doubt ran home to shout, "They're blowing the trumpets. Listen, everyone!"

Nine days for preparation followed. The Day of Atonement, the tenth day of the seventh month, could, like our Christmas, fall on any day of the week. But whatever day it fell on, it was as sacred as the weekly Sabbath day. Leviticus 23:26-32. Whereas, however, the Sabbath was a day for joy (Isaiah 58:13, 14), the Day of Atonement was an occasion for the people to "afflict" themselves. They were to engage in deep spiritual self-examination. A custom arose of fasting on the day.\*

The purpose of the Day of Atonement was the removal of sin, ceremonially from the sanctuary and truly from the people. Through Moses, God told the Israelites that the high priest entered the most holy place not only to "make atonement for the sanctuary" but also to make atonement "for you, to cleanse you," so that "*from all your sins you shall be clean before the Lord*" (see Leviticus 16:30-33).

Leviticus 16:29, 30 specifically states that this removal of sin was the reason they were to afflict themselves. They were to afflict themselves "for"—that is, *because*—an atonement was being made for them.

It was taught very clearly that the atonement would not benefit the people if they did not afflict themselves. The Day of Atonement offered no magic and encouraged no superstition. The people were taught that "whoever is not afflicted on this same day shall be cut off from his people." Leviticus 23:29. To make the point dramatically urgent, God added, "Whoever does any work on this same day [that is, whoever refuses to keep it as a sacred, solemn Sabbath], that person I will destroy from among his people."

It was a day for at-one-ment. God had appointed the day; He had designed the mercy seat, consecrated the high priest, and provided the atoning blood. Those who refused reconciliation evidently chose separation, and God honored their decision.

*Day of Atonement/Day of Judgment.* The requirement that persons who refused to take the day seriously should be "cut off" implies that the Day of Atonement *was also a day of judgment*. Any Israelite who refused to enter seriously into the religious promise of the day was to be investigated by the elders, tried, sentenced, and punished.

Jewish rabbis have long described the day as one of judgment. In fact, Jewish

\*The requirement to "afflict" themselves was at first a completely spiritual one. The people were expected to observe the Day of Atonement as a very sacred occasion on which to worship God, pray earnestly, confess sin, and make wrongs right. They were to afflict their souls by probing their memories and their motives to see if they were really sincere in their religious profession.

tradition has expanded the concept of judgment to include the first day of the month (Rosh Hashanah) as well, and even all the days in between, with final sentence being pronounced on Yom Kippur.<sup>31</sup> "The idea of a universal day of judgment," says *The Universal Jewish Encyclopedia*, dominates the ten-day penitential season and "is expressed particularly in the Unethanneh Tokef prayer of Yom Kippur."<sup>32</sup>

With the Day of Atonement seen to be a day of judgment, we sense immediately that the cleansing of the sanctuary in Daniel 8:14 is closely parallel to the judgment scene of Daniel 7 and to the arrival of the supernatural stone in Daniel 2. We are on firm ground. Unfolding parallelism is one of the principal keys to understanding the book of Daniel.

The judgment in Daniel 7 compares readily with the entry of Christ as High Priest into heaven's most holy place at the commencement of the celestial Day of Atonement/Day of Judgment:

**Thrones were placed** [*symbolized by the ark in the most holy place*]  
**and one that was ancient of days** [*God the Father*]  
**took his seat** [*on heaven's "mercy seat"*]; . . .  
**ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him** [*the angels, represented in the tabernacle by the cherubim above the ark*];  
**the court sat in judgment** [*heaven's Day of Atonement*],  
**and the books were opened.**

**I saw in the night visions, and behold, with the clouds of heaven there came**  
 [*passing into heaven's "most holy place" like the earthly high priest on the Day of Atonement*]  
**one like a son of man** [*Jesus, our heavenly High Priest*],  
**and he came to the Ancient of Days. . . .**

**And to him was given dominion and glory and kingdom.** [*At the close of this heavenly judgment, Christ will receive a kingdom that is peopled entirely with "saints" who have been fully cleansed from sin and who have chosen at-one-ment with God and with one another.*] Daniel 7:9-14.

Here is the cleansing of the sanctuary as viewed, not merely on the portable TV of the Old Testament tabernacle, but on the wide, wide screen of infinity and eternity. The cleansing of the tabernacle was only a "shadow" (Hebrews 8:5) of something that far transcended it. As a place, the heavenly sanctuary is glorious enough for the throne of Deity, vast enough for millions of angels. It is cleansed, not by the blood of bulls and goats, but by the life and death and blood of Jesus.

*Can heaven be "cleansed"?* But can we really conceive of a "cleansing" of the sanctuary in heaven? Can anything in heaven need to be cleaned?

Hebrews 9:22, 23 answers Yes. "It was necessary for the copies of the heavenly things to be purified with these rites, but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these." J. B. Phillips translates the passage a little more clearly: "It was necessary for the earthly reproductions of heavenly realities to be

purified by such methods, but the actual heavenly things could only be made pure in God's sight by higher sacrifices than these."<sup>33</sup>

In our study of Daniel 9 (and of Revelation 14 in *God Cares, II*), we shall try to learn much more about the precise meaning of the "cleansing of the sanctuary" in heaven.

But we have already seen enough to know that the symbolic language of Daniel 8:14 is not directed to the strange behavior of Antiochus Epiphanes (see *Your Questions Answered*, pages 183-186). *The language of Daniel 8:14 is symbolic*. It transports us to the cosmic courtroom, to the universal assize of Daniel 7.

*Restored, victorious, AND cleansed!* Gabriel's choice of the unique word *nitsdaq* has provided us very appropriately with the concept of "cleansing" and of "restoring to righteousness (or purity) after defilement." The New English Bible has yet another translation, "emerge victorious" (page 175). Well, there is a distinct sense in which "emerge victorious" is appropriate also.

For ages Christ's *tamid*, His priestly ministry in heaven, was to be "trampled under foot," in some sense even "taken away from him." And the prophecy has been fulfilled. For many centuries the truth about Jesus has been maligned. His freedom to help people has been limited by the false theories of paganism and secularism and even by the mistaken emphases of certain Christian doctrines. Not to mention evil men, well-intentioned men have so misrepresented the fatherly character of God and the amazing grace of Christ that millions of people have preferred to depend on earthly priests, to accumulate their own good works, or to take their chances with Lady Luck rather than to trust Jesus for forgiveness and let His Spirit transform their lives.

To put the matter bluntly, "Rome" has misrepresented Christ's ministry with a false sacrifice (the mass), a false priesthood, a false head of the church, and a false method of salvation.

In the judgment God puts a stop to this state of affairs and sets all things right. It is a day of victory for Him and for His way of doing things.

*Heaven's jubilee.* The sanctuary is God's court of justice.

The Day of Judgment is His "Day of Atonement," when He vindicates and cleanses everyone who sincerely desires to be at-one with Him and when He removes everyone who separates himself from Him.

When God has finished doing this, a shout of victory will ring from galaxy to galaxy across the starry sky. God's patience with wicked people has been a mercy to the wicked, but it has been a trial to the saints. In their woe they have often cried out, "O Sovereign Lord, how long?" Revelation 6:10. When at last God brings the wicked to their end, the righteous universe will exclaim in praise, "We give thanks to thee, Lord God Almighty, . . . that thou hast taken thy great power and begun to reign." Revelation 11:17.

Indeed, although the ancient Day of Atonement began with solemnity, it too ended with joy. Village maidens clothed in white danced over the fields, exulting in the happiness of renewed innocence.<sup>34</sup>

God provided for another source of joy in addition to renewed innocence. In the afternoon of the Day of Atonement every fiftieth year, at the conclusion of seven cycles of seven years, the "shofar" trumpets announced the beginning of a Year of Jubilee. Leviticus 25.

Heralds were to "proclaim liberty throughout all the land unto all the inhabitants thereof." Leviticus 25:10, K.J.V. Hebrew slaves were to be released. All land that had been bought or sold since the previous jubilee was to be returned to the descendants of the original owners. It was a plan for curing social inequity. It taught that God, not man, is the real owner of the earth.

What an illustration for the book of Daniel! At the close of heaven's Day of Atonement/Day of Judgment, the trumpet of the Lord will sound, God will declare His Son King of kings and Lord of lords, the supernatural stone will smite the image, and the earth will be taken from those who destroy it (Revelation 11:18) and given to the saints of the Most High. The meek will inherit the earth. Matthew 5:5.

**The court shall sit in judgment** [*on heaven's Day of Atonement*]  
**and his** [*the little horn's*]  
**dominion** [*his self-assumed authority to trample on Christ's tamid and on His truth and people*]  
**shall be taken away to be consumed and destroyed to the end. . . .**  
**And the greatness of the kingdoms . . . shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High** [*at the commencement of heaven's Year of Jubilee*]." Daniel 7:26, 27.

*The Day of Atonement and you.* The personal message of Daniel 8:14 is that God wants *you!* He cares enough to draw you to Himself at any cost to Himself. "The Father himself loves you." John 16:27. And He wants you to examine yourself deeply to see if any sin separates you from Him and separates you from other people whom He also loves.

A God who calls the Day of Judgment a Day of Atonement must be a very wonderful God.

So we want to know *when* the heavenly sanctuary will triumph, *when* it will be cleansed and restored to its rightful state.

In chapter 9 Gabriel will come back and "make us understand" many things, including the mystery of the "two thousand and three hundred evenings and mornings," which are 2300 days.

#### **Further Interesting Reading**

In Arthur S. Maxwell, *The Bible Story*, vol. 6:

"Gabriel's Glorious Secret," beginning on p. 66.

In *Bible Readings for the Home*:

The chapters entitled "The Prophetic Symbols of Daniel 8,"

"The Atonement in Type and Antitype," and "The Judgment."

**DANIEL 8:9-12: SYMBOLIC PREDICTION**

9. **Out of one of them** [*the four winds of heaven, the four directions of the compass*] **came forth a little horn** [*Rome*] **which grew exceedingly great toward the south** [*Africa*], **toward the east** [*Greece, Asia Minor, and Syria*], **and toward the glorious land** [*Palestine*].
10. **And it grew great, even to the host of heaven** [*the people of God, Jewish and Christian*]; **and some of the host of the stars** [*God's people*] **it cast down to the ground.**
11. **and trampled upon them** [*persecuted them*]. **It magnified itself, even up to the Prince of the host** [*Jesus Christ, whom pagan Rome crucified and Christian Rome often misinterpreted*], **and the continual burnt offering** [*the tamid, the continual ministry of Christ in heaven and the symbol of it in the Old Testament ritual*] **was taken away from him, and the place of his sanctuary was overthrown** [*partially at the destruction of Herod's temple by pagan Rome and much more fully through the misrepresentations of Christian Rome*].
12. **And the host** [*the people of God*] **was given over to it** [*Rome, the little horn*] **together with the continual burnt offering** [*the tamid*] **through transgression** [*God permitting the forces of evil to reveal themselves so that error could be seen in its sinfulness and people would be persuaded to turn away from it*]; **and truth** [*about the Ten Commandments, Christ's heavenly ministry, and righteousness by faith*] **was cast down to the ground, and the horn** [*Rome*] **acted and prospered.**

**DANIEL 8:23-25: GABRIEL'S INTERPRETATIVE PREDICTION**

23. **And at the latter end of their rule** [*at the end of the Hellenistic kingdoms symbolized by the four horns, around 65 B.C.*], **when the transgressors have reached their full measure** [*when human wickedness is at a peak*], **a king of bold countenance** [*Rome*], **one who understands riddles** [*"skilled in intrigue," N.A.S.B.; "A master of stratagem" N.E.B., referring to pagan and Christian Rome as masters of international and religious diplomacy*], **shall arise.**
24. **His power shall be great, and he shall cause fearful destruction, and shall succeed in what he does, and destroy mighty men** [*political enemies*] **and the people of the saints** [*the persecuted people of God*].
25. **By his cunning he shall make deceit prosper under his hand** [*persuading millions to follow pagan and medieval traditions*], **and in his own mind he shall magnify himself** [*the emperor as a divine being, the medieval pope as "another God on earth"*]. **Without warning he shall destroy many** [*for example, in the St. Bartholomew's Day massacre*]; **and he shall even rise up against the Prince of princes** [*Jesus Christ, on the cross and as our royal priest in heaven*]; **but, by no human hand** [*that is, by the providence of God in human affairs, by clearer perception of truth, by the Day of Judgment in heaven, and finally by the second coming of Christ*], **he shall be broken.**



## Your Questions Answered

**Who was Antiochus Epiphanes?** We have frequently referred to Antiochus Epiphanes (see e.g. pages 153-154). Much more can be said, however, to anyone who is interested.

*To begin with:* Probably the reason that many Christians have assumed that Antiochus Epiphanes fulfilled the prophecy of Daniel 8 is that their acquaintance with him has been limited to a few paragraphs in books on prophecy and to brief notes in study Bibles. If they knew more about him, they would recognize that he could not be the little horn of Daniel 8.

Antiochus Epiphanes was the eighth king (175-164 B.C.) in the Seleucid dynasty of the Hellenistic kingdom that came to be known as Syria. He is mentioned by the Roman historian Livy (*History of Rome*, books 44, 45), the Greek historian Polybius (*The Histories*, books 26, 27), and the anonymous Jewish historians who wrote 1 and 2 Maccabees in the Apocrypha. He scarcely strides out of their pages as a legendary antichrist. He emerges as a born loser, a really tragic little man.

His father, Antiochus III the Great, pushed back the boundaries of the Seleucid kingdom to their original position. But at the Battle of Magnesia, 190 B.C., even he lost much of the territory—all of Asia Minor—to the Romans, a power newly arising in the west.

The Romans liberated the area they confiscated from Antiochus III and did not take direct control of it. Rome was still a “**little horn**,” developing slowly from the direction of “**one of the four winds**.” Daniel 8:8, 9. Roman envoys, however, sailing east from Rome, clearly dominated international politics in the Middle East.

To make sure that Antiochus III honored the treaty imposed on him after his bitter defeat at Magnesia, the Romans took hostage one of his youthful sons, the later Antiochus Epiphanes. At Rome, and later during a visit to Greece, young Antiochus became saturated with the kind of Hellenistic culture which the Romans were then adopting. At his father's death the Romans allowed the young man to accede to the throne, and he returned to Antioch determined to make a name for himself by (1) spreading Hellenism—Greek thought and customs—at any cost and (2) enlarging his domains in imitation of his Dad's exploits.

We have already seen (page 153) how his military dreams were shattered when a Roman envoy drew a circle around him. His cultural dreams succeeded a little better, but ultimately they led to his downfall. He attempted to spread Hellenism by granting sufficient money to various cities so that they could build Greek temples and Greek gymnasiums. In the process he reduced his nation to bankruptcy. He died while on a campaign to recoup his finances by robbing the treasure of an ancient eastern temple, as earlier (see page 184) he

had raided the treasure of the Jewish temple.

Both his cultural and his military dreams led to his notorious relationship with the Jews. As 1 Maccabees 1:11-15; 2:43-52 reveals, a *group of liberal, Hellenizing Jews* led by the Jewish *high priest, Jason*, took the initiative in applying to Antiochus for a grant to build a Greek gymnasium in Jerusalem.

In a Greek gymnasium athletes (all male) practiced and competed with each other without any clothes on. (The word "gymnasium" means "a place of nakedness.") The ostensible reason behind this custom was to honor manliness. When even the priests, at the instigation of the high priest, neglected their temple duties in order to work out nude at the gym (2 Maccabees 4:17-27), the more conservative Jews were scandalized.

Antiochus was a playful fellow when he wasn't angry. He enjoyed, for example, dressing up like a commoner and running for election. It is not clear that the opposition of the conservative Jews would have led to a confrontation with him had Antiochus not been turned out of Egypt by the Roman envoy. It had cost Antiochus much to organize his army for the invasion of Egypt, and suddenly the whole enterprise had become a dead loss. He was setting out for home when he learned that the priest Jason (he, again!) was engaged in an attack against his fellow Jews. Confounded and sore from his treatment in Egypt, Antiochus attacked the Jews as an outlet for his private rage. Then he robbed the temple as a means of recovering the cost of his Egyptian campaign. Even so he might not have robbed the temple if he had not been guided by Menelaus, a Hellenizing Jew who had promised Antiochus a large bribe in exchange for being allowed to replace Jason as high priest.

It was after this unfortunate series of events, in which renegade Jews played a very prominent role, that Antiochus shifted from voluntary cultural uniformity to required religious uniformity.

As a part of the new order of things, on Chislev 15, 168 B.C., a statue of the Greek god Zeus was erected upon the altar of burnt offering. First Maccabees 1 indicates that once more liberal Jews assisted in the process. Ten days later, on Chislev 25, they began to sacrifice "unclean" animals on the altar, most likely including swine. 2 Maccabees 6:5.

The conservative Jews now rallied around Judas Maccabaeus, under whose intrepid leadership they secured a series of victories over the armies which Antiochus sent against them. Antiochus's Judean campaign was as much a failure as the rest of his pitiable career.

Safe at last from the mad king's hostility and from the machinations of the liberal Jews, the devout Jews removed the old altar and dedicated a new one three years to the day after the offering of unclean sacrifices had begun, three years and ten days after the statue of Zeus had been erected. Chislev 25 occurs in the Jewish calendar close to Christmas in the Gregorian calendar. It is today honored as "Hanukkah," celebrating the "dedication" of the new altar in 165 B.C. In the New Testament John 10:22, 23 dates an episode in Christ's life with a

reference to this annual feast: "It was the feast of the Dedication at Jerusalem; it was winter."

There is no doubt that Antiochus interrupted the temple services, but all attempts to fit his interruption into the 2300 "evenings and mornings" of Daniel 8:14 have uniformly failed. There is simply no way they can be fitted into three years, or even into three years and ten days!

And it should be noted that the desolation of the temple was as largely due to the disloyalty of Jews as to the madness of Antiochus. Sooner or later the liberal Jews might well have desolated the temple on their own had Antiochus not required them to do so. They were already neglecting the ritual in order to practice naked in the gym, and they had already secured the king's support for Hellenizing Jerusalem.

As long ago as 1733, Sir Isaac Newton, the celebrated scientist who first explained the operation of gravity, wrote the following notice about Daniel 9 and Antiochus Epiphanes:

This last horn is by some taken for ANTIOCHUS EPIPHANES, but not very judiciously. A horn of a Beast is never taken for a single person: it always signifies a new kingdom, and the kingdom of ANTIOCHUS was an old one. ANTIOCHUS reigned over one of the four horns, and the little horn was a fifth under its proper kings. This horn was at first a little one, and waxed exceeding great, but so did not ANTIOCHUS. It is described great above all the former horns, and so was not ANTIOCHUS. His

*Antiochus Epiphanes revealed his contempt for God by offering an "unclean" sacrifice on the altar of the Jerusalem temple.*



kingdom on the contrary was weak, and tributary to the ROMANS, and he did not enlarge it. The horn was a King of fierce countenance, and destroyed wonderfully, and prospered and practised; that is, he prospered in his practices against the holy people: but ANTIOCHUS was frightened out of EGYPT by a mere message of the ROMANS, and afterwards routed and baffled by the JEWS. The horn was mighty by another's power, ANTIOCHUS acted by his own. The horn stood up against the Prince of the Host of heaven, the Prince of Princes; and this is the character not of ANTIOCHUS but of ANTICHRIST. The horn cast down the Sanctuary to the ground, and so did not ANTIOCHUS; he left it standing. The Sanctuary and Host were trampled under foot 2300 days; and in DANIEL'S Prophecies days are put for years: but the profanation of the Temple in the reign of ANTIOCHUS did not last for so many natural days. These were to last till the time of the end, till the last end of the indignation against the JEWS; and this indignation is not yet at an end. They were to last till the Sanctuary which had been cast down should be cleansed, and the Sanctuary is not yet cleansed.<sup>35</sup>

Sir Isaac Newton's observations contrast sharply with the note to Daniel 8:1 in the 1967 edition of the Scofield Reference Bible, which refers to the "remarkably precise predictions in chapters 8 and 11 about the reign, character, and antecedents of Antiochus Epiphanes."

#### References

1. Werner Soedel and Vernard Foley, "Ancient Catapults," *Scientific American*, March 1979, pp. 150-160.
2. J. B. Bury, *A History of Greece to the Death of Alexander the Great*, The Modern Library (New York: Random House, n.d.), pp. 769, 770.
3. *Ibid.*, pp. 761, 762.
4. Stewart C. Easton, *The Western Heritage from the Earliest Times to the Present* (New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1961), p. 81.
5. See Polybius, *The Histories*, 26.1.
6. The classic account is in Livy, *History of Rome*, 45.12.
7. Harry A. Dawe, *Ancient Greece and Rome*, World Cultures in Perspective (Columbus, Ohio: Charles E. Merrill Publishing Co., 1970), p. 188.
8. William Poole et al., compilers, *Rodeheaver's Gospel Solos and Duets Number 3* (Chicago: The Rodeheaver Hall-Mack Co., 1938), no. 131.
9. Hebrews 9:3, 4 and 1 Kings 6:22 identify the golden altar with the most holy place, not because it was located in the most holy place, for it was located immediately outside of it; but because the incense rising from the golden altar was offered to God, whose presence was manifested most markedly above the ark in the most holy place, the golden altar was sometimes thought of as "belonging to" the most holy place. Exodus 40:26 makes plain that it was indeed located in the holy place (here called the "tent of meeting"). Exodus 30:1-10 manifests a clear awareness of the close relationship between the golden altar and the ark, but by requiring Aaron to burn incense on the golden altar twice a day this passage also shows that it was located in the holy place, for Aaron was permitted to enter the most holy place only once a year.
10. *The Jewish Encyclopedia*, art., "Atonement, Day of."
11. L. M. Hollingworth, "The Cross Was His Own."
12. The selections from the Baltimore Catechism are taken from *This We Believe, By This We Live: Revised Edition of the Baltimore Catechism, No. 3* (n.p.: Confraternity of Christian Doctrine, 1957).

13. In order to be faithful to the Fourth Lateran Council, to Thomas Aquinas, and to the Council of Trent, the Baltimore Catechism ought to say that the *substance* of the bread is transformed into the *substance* of the body and blood of Christ. The meaning of "substance" is not our ordinary understanding of the word in common use but a philosophical one, referring to the essential nature or self-existence of a thing. One useful rendering of the assumed change is, "The 'breadness' of the bread changes into the 'bodyness' and 'bloodness' of Christ." McKenzie, *Catholic Church*, p. 147, says that "the relation of the bread and wine to the body and blood of Jesus Christ is one of the most intricate theological propositions within the Roman Catholic system, and it is difficult even for a trained theologian to state it accurately."

14. *A New Catechism* (New York: Herder and Herder, 1967), pp. 176, 177.

15. *Ibid.*, pp. 480, 481.

16. McKenzie, *Catholic Church*, pp. 10, 4. What Catholics do believe about papal claims, he says, is that they are a "legitimate extension" of New Testament doctrine.

17. *Ibid.*, pp. 150, 151.

18. Thomas Frederick Simmons and Henry Edward Nolloth, eds., *The Lay Folks Catechism*, with intro. notes, and glossary, original series, no. 118 (London: Early English Text Society, 1901), intro.

19. For items in this paragraph and below see, among other sources, Gordon Hall Gerould, ed., *The North England Homily Collection* (published privately, 1902); and G. R. Owst, *Preaching in Medieval England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1926).

20. "In the later Middle Ages, the right to share in an indulgence was hawked around Europe by the 'Pardoners.' . . . Pardons were a source of great profit to the ecclesiastical authorities and were frequently used to obtain money for building purposes, as for St. Peter's, Rome, and the completion of York Minster."—*Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*, art. "Pardon."

21. Walter W. Skeat, ed., *The Vision of William Concerning Piers the Plowman in Three Parallel Texts Together With Richard the Redeless*, 2 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1886), B text, prologue and passus kk.

22. Robert E. McNally, S.J., "The Reformation: A Catholic Reappraisal," in *Luther, Erasmus and the Reformation: A Catholic-Protestant Reappraisal*, ed. John C. Olin, James D. Smart, and Robert McNally, S.J. (New York: Fordham University Press, 1969), p. 39.

23. *Ibid.*, p. 32.

24. The two principal ancient Jewish translations of the Old Testament into Greek are the Septuagint (LXX) and the one by Theodotian, which is of higher quality. The LXX is generally agreed to have been completed around 150 B.C. The translation of Theodotian has generally been supposed to have been made around A.D. 180 in response to the rise of Christianity. Recently, however, study of the Dead Sea Scrolls has suggested strongly that the Theodotian translation was made around 150 B.C. also. See documentation and arguments in Gerhard F. Hasel, "Daniel Survives the Critics' Den," *Ministry*, January 1979, pp. 9-11.

25. Keil, *Daniel*, pp. 303, 304.

26. Edward J. Young, *The Prophecy of Daniel: A Commentary* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1949), pp. 174, 175.

27. John F. Walvoord, *Daniel: The Key to Prophetic Revelation, A Commentary* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1971), pp. 189, 190.

28. Leon Wood, *A Commentary on Daniel* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan Publishing House, 1973), p. 218.

29. S. J. Schwantes, "'Ereḇ Bōqer of Daniel 8:14 Re-examined,'" *Andrews University Seminary Studies* 16 (1978):375-385. A very helpful article.

30. In spite of the instructions in Numbers 10 that silver trumpets were to be used on the first day of the month, the Jewish ritualists at some point in history chose to blow "shofar" trumpets instead. Shofar trumpets were adapted animal horns. Instead of the clear tone of metal trumpets, they produced tones that resembled throaty bleats and blasts. They are still employed in Jewish ritual today (see, e.g., *Encyclopedia Judaica*, art. "Shofar").

31. See, e.g., *The Jewish Encyclopedia*, art. "Day of Judgment," and *Encyclopaedica Judaica*, art. "Day of Atonement."

32. *The Universal Jewish Encyclopedia*, art. "Day of Judgment."

33. The book of Hebrews is here possibly speaking of the dedication of the tabernacle; but the point is clear that heavenly things can stand in need of cleansing.

34. See, e.g., *Encyclopaedica Judaica*, art. "Day of Atonement"; and Mishnah *Ta'anith* 4.8, trans. in *The Babylonian Talmud*, Soncino ed., 35 vols. (London: The Soncino Press, 1935-1952), *Ta'anith* 26b, p. 139.

35. *Sir Isaac Newton's Daniel and the Apocalypse*, ed., Sir William Whitla (London: John Murray, 1922), p. 222.

# Daniel 9

## God Schedules the Atonement

### Introduction

Daniel 9 is one of the most Christ-centered chapters in the Old Testament. The fulfillment of its precise predictions concerning the first coming of Jesus has fascinated Christians since the early days of the church. Furthermore, insights gained over the past two hundred years have led some Bible students to believe that this chapter, when linked to Daniel 7:9-14 and 8:13, 14, dates the judgment which precedes the second coming of Christ. They are right, for Daniel 7-9 shows that we are already living in the hour of judgment.

At the close of Daniel 8, we left Daniel in distress. The vision of the little horn and of the trampled sanctuary had made him ill. He returned to his government responsibilities after spending a few days in bed; but, he says, **"I was appalled by the vision and did not understand it."** Daniel 8:27.

His failure to understand the vision of Daniel 8 was in conflict with Gabriel's commission to **"make this man understand the vision."** Daniel 8:16. Therefore in chapter 9 Gabriel returned to continue his interrupted explanation.

Actually thirteen active years (551-538 B.C.) elapsed between chapters 8 and 9. You will recall from page 101 that *fifty* years (603-553) elapsed

between chapters 2 and 7.

In the interim Belshazzar's corrupt kingship had coasted to its close. Babylon had fallen to a Medo-Persian army led by Darius the Mede (probably Gubaru, or Gobryas (see pages 99, 101), and King Cyrus the Great had entered the city in triumph. Darius was now serving as vassal king of Babylon under King Cyrus and would continue a little over a year, from October 539 to his death in November 538. During this year Daniel was appointed chairman of the presidents—and was also sentenced to a night in the lions' den. Daniel 6.

Inasmuch as the events of Daniel 9 occurred during Darius's one-year reign, we can calculate that Daniel's experience with the angel who protected him from the lions occurred either shortly before or shortly after his visit from the angel Gabriel.

As you read Daniel 9, you will notice that the chapter falls into three clear divisions: (1) Daniel's "diary" reference to his study of the writings of Jeremiah, (2) Daniel's heartfelt prayer, and (3) Gabriel's further prediction explaining Daniel 8:14.

*Daniel's diary.* **"In the first year of Darius,"** Daniel says, **"I . . . perceived in the books the number of years which, according to the word of the Lord to Jeremiah the prophet, must pass before the end of the desolations of Jerusalem, namely, seventy years."** Verses 1-3.

Daniel was concerned about Daniel 8:14 and its symbolic prediction, “for two thousand and three hundred evenings and mornings, then the sanctuary shall be restored to its rightful state.” He had good reason to know that it referred to the spiritual restoration or “cleansing” associated with the annual Day of Atonement (see pages 175-181). But what about the 2300 evenings and mornings? The temple in Jerusalem was in ruins. An “evening and morning” is a *day* according to Genesis 1 (see page 174), and Daniel quite likely knew that his contemporary, the prophet Ezekiel, had been shown in long-time visions that a *day symbolizes a year*. Ezekiel 4:6. Was it possible, then, he must have wondered, that the sanctuary in Jerusalem would not be restored for 2300 years?

Daniel had known Jeremiah the prophet during his childhood in Jerusalem. He cherished a copy of the older man’s writings. In these writings Jeremiah said something about the time during which Jerusalem would lie desolate. Daniel decided to look at the

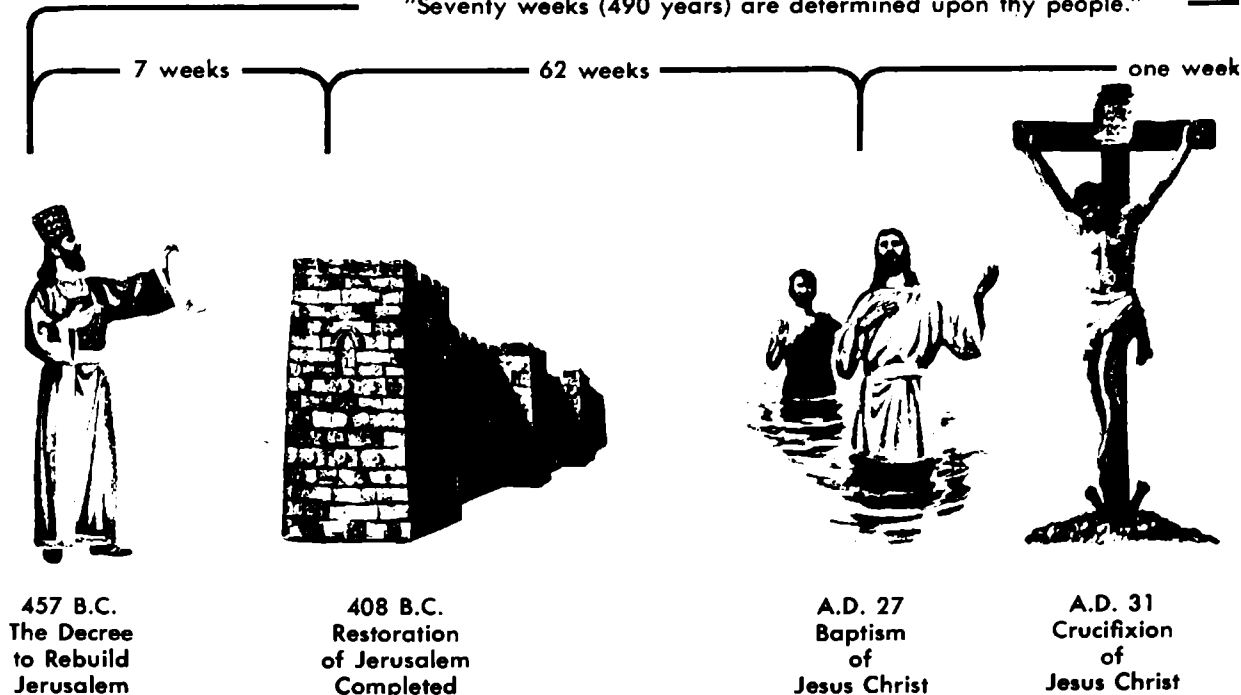
passages in Jeremiah again.

Unrolling the scroll, Daniel read that *after seventy years* God would “punish the king of Babylon and . . . the Chaldeans for their iniquity.” Jeremiah 25: 11, 12. This was encouraging—for Babylon by now had been punished by the Medes and Persians, and Jerusalem had been subjugated for sixty-eight years (605-538, counted inclusively). The seventy years were almost at an end! But Jerusalem and its temple were in ruins; and nothing, apparently, was being done toward rebuilding them. Had Jeremiah, after all, been wrong? Would the sanctuary, perhaps, lie waste for 2300 years?

Daniel unrolled the scroll further and read again:

For thus says the Lord:  
When *seventy years* are completed for Babylon  
I will visit you, and  
I will fulfill to you my promise  
and  
Bring you back to this place  
[Jerusalem].

“Seventy weeks (490 years) are determined upon thy people.”





*For I know the plans I have for you, says the Lord,  
plans for welfare and not for evil,  
to give you a future and a hope.*

Then you will call upon me and  
come and pray to me, and  
I will hear you.

You will seek me and find me;  
*when you seek me with all your heart,*  
*I will be found of you,*  
says the Lord, and

I will restore your fortunes  
and gather you from all the  
nations  
and all the places where I have  
driven you,  
says the Lord,  
and I will bring you back to the  
place  
from which I sent you into exile.  
Jeremiah 29:10-14.

Such beautiful words! Such comfort-

ing promises! Such a gracious picture  
of God.

But the passage was also a call to  
prayer—earnest, solemn, penetrating  
prayer. “When you seek me with all  
your heart, I will be found of you.”

*Daniel's prayer.* And so Daniel  
prayed. Most of Daniel 9 consists of his  
prayer. And what a prayer it is. As  
Norman Porteous says,<sup>1</sup> “If this was  
indeed how men prayed in those days,  
then we are in a position to understand  
how the faithful among the Jews came  
through the storms and stresses” of  
their day.

*Gabriel's explanation.* While he was  
still praying, God gave a signal to Ga-  
briel; and the great, friendly angel came  
once more to explain the vision. He  
arrived “**at the time of the evening sac-  
rifice.**” Daniel 9:21. No lamb had been  
offered in Jerusalem for almost fifty  
years, but God honored the time of day  
when a lamb would have been offered  
if the sanctuary had still been standing.  
Gabriel arrived at a most appropriate  
time to explain a prophecy about the  
sanctuary.

1810 years to the sanctuary cleansing



A.D. 34  
Stoning  
of  
Stephen



A.D. 1844  
Cleansing  
of  
Heavenly Sanctuary

# The Message of Daniel 9

## I. A Prayer That God Could Answer

Daniel must have been pleased to see Gabriel arrive while he was still praying.

We all want to have our prayers answered; so, before looking at what Gabriel told Daniel, let us see what we can learn about this prayer that God answered so remarkably. No doubt Heaven preserved it for us so we would study it with this in mind.

We have already learned a lot about Daniel's prayer life (see pages 96-98). In this present prayer Daniel did at least six things that deserve our attention.

1. He prayed very much in earnest.
2. He depended on God's righteousness, not his own.
3. He used the Bible.
4. He confessed his own sins *and* the sins of his group.
5. He sought the glory of God and of His sanctuary.
6. He claimed God's promises.

Like all human communication, effective prayer involves both words and attitude. "Take with you words and return to the Lord," says Hosea 14:2. "Seek me with all your heart," adds Jeremiah 29:13.

In harmony with the customs of his day Daniel emphasized the deep longing of his soul not only with the choice of appropriate words but also with "**fasting**" and the use of "**sackcloth and ashes**." Daniel 9:3. Sackcloth was a coarse fabric of goat or camel hair. It was worn in times of great sorrow or deep spiritual agitation (see, for example, 2 Samuel 3:31 and 2 Kings 19:1, 2). Drab and unattractive, sackcloth expressed a person's heartfelt humility. Dirtying one's face with ashes intensified the sense of self-abasement.

Daniel's fasting suggests that his prayer, as we have it in Daniel 9, may be a summary of prayers offered over an extensive period. Daniel 10:2, 3 describes another fast that Daniel observed about two years later and that lasted for three weeks.

Nothing indicates that Daniel felt that his fasting, sackcloth, and ashes could earn merit points. They helped express his earnestness and no doubt actually deepened it. But he didn't call God's attention to them. He said, "**We do not present our supplications before thee on the ground of our righteousness, but on the ground of thy great mercy.**" Daniel 9:18.

James 5:16 says that "the prayer of a righteous man has great power in its effects"; but Paul reminds us, "None is righteous, no, not one." Romans 3:10. So what are we to do? Do what Daniel did! Come before God in our sinfulness. It is the only way we *can* come. Confess that we are sinners, and ask God to hear us on the grounds of His mercy and righteousness. Jesus invites us to come in *His* name. John 14:13, 14.

Daniel used the Bible in his prayer. His words show that he must have been

reading three passages written especially for exiles: (1) Moses' counsel to future exiles (Leviticus 26); (2) Solomon's prayer for future exiles, offered during the dedication of the same temple which now lay in ruins (1 Kings 8:46-53); (3) Jeremiah's letter to contemporary Babylonian exiles (Jeremiah 29:15-20).

Each of these passages indicates that the cause of exile is sin. God wanted the Israelites to enjoy the Land of Palestine, and He promised it to them in perpetuity. If the Israelites persisted in sinning God would allow them to be carried into exile; but if they confessed their sins in the foreign land, He would forgive them and bring them home. Leviticus 26 specified that the exiles must confess the sins of their ancestors: "But if they [the exiles] confess their iniquity *and the iniquity of their fathers* in their treachery which they committed against me, and also in walking contrary to me, . . . and they make amends for their iniquity; then I will remember my covenant with Jacob, . . . and I will remember the land." Verses 40-42.

Responding to this instruction, Daniel prayed, "***We have sinned and done wrong and acted wickedly and rebelled, turning aside from thy commandments and ordinances; we have not listened to thy servants the prophets. . . . All Israel has transgressed thy law and turned aside, refusing to obey thy voice.***" Daniel 9:5-11.

It is absolutely astonishing that Daniel offered a prayer like this. Even his enemies, when they set themselves to find a reason for killing him, could find nothing improper in his conduct. Daniel 6:4. Yet Daniel said, "***We have sinned and done wrong and acted wickedly and rebelled.***"

Daniel was not lying. He was not playing games. He was identifying himself with his group, with the social unit of which he was a member. As a whole the group was in exile because as a whole the group had sinned.

It is fashionable in some quarters today to say that our church—or our nation, or our school, or whatever—doesn't accomplish what it might because our bishops, or our congressmen, or our administrators have been corrupt and lazy. In this way we blame our leaders instead of ourselves. Daniel, however, said, "***To us, O Lord, belongs confusion of face, to our kings, to our princes, and to our fathers, because we have sinned against thee.***" Daniel 9:8.

Seeing a drunk staggering along, a famous evangelist is reputed to have said, "There, but for the grace of God, go I." When in prayer we admit that *we* have sinned, we acknowledge that we are made of the same stuff as our leaders, and that if we were in their shoes, we would likely make the same mistakes or worse. Indeed in our families and among our acquaintances we do make similar mistakes. "You have no excuse, O man, whoever you are, when you judge another," warns Romans 2:1, "because you, the judge, are doing the very same things."

If we had lived five hundred years ago or a thousand, who is to say we would have done any better than our ancestors?

"O God, forgive my family. *We* quarrel so much. We have so much time for TV trivia and so little time for things that matter."

"O God, forgive my corporation. *We* have such unhappy tensions between

management and labor and so little regard for quality."

"O God, forgive my nation. *We* are so materialistic, so racially separate."

"O God, forgive my club. *We* are so exclusive and flippant."

"O God, forgive my church, the Christian church. Through the ages we have persecuted one another, we have compelled people to believe as we do, we have disregarded Your prophets and trampled on Your commandments. As Christians we have failed to let You give us victory over pride, greed, and lust. We have often given non-Christians the impression that God Himself cannot really help people. To us belongs confusion of face as we see Islam and astrology and eastern cults make more converts than the church of Christ.

"O God, bring in a new day. Bring it soon. Let Your church be changed into Your likeness. Make us clean, generous, kind. Take away our adultery, racism, and Sabbath breaking. In the words of Daniel, '**O Lord, hear; O Lord, forgive; O Lord, give heed and act; delay not, for thy own sake, O my God, because thy city and thy people are called by thy name.**' Daniel 9:19."

Those last words from Daniel point up another priority in prevailing prayer. Daniel sought God's glory and the glory of His sanctuary. If every Christian—if one billion Christians of all denominations—were pleading with God today like Daniel, asking Him to forgive our collective sins and to make His church a true credit to His name, how God could bless us! How impressed the non-Christians would be!

If that is too much to hope for, how about a prayer-study group on your own street? Women who stay home with children and who see few adults besides their husbands need and greatly enjoy such fellowship with other women. Men and couples likewise get together frequently in prayer-study groups. At a prayer-study group, or even in your own family, you could start out by studying prayer. At the end of this section are lists of selected prayers and lists of things the Bible says about prayer. You could then analyze them, find the principles involved, and apply them to your own prayer life. All Bible prayers are different. We find no single verbal package to employ when approaching God. Then you could pray that God would use you as a group to bless others.

One more thing. Daniel knew from the Bible that God is a "covenant-keeping" deity—a God who keeps His promises. At the beginning of his prayer he addressed God as the One who "**keepest covenant and steadfast love with those who love him and keep his commandments.**" Daniel 9:4.

Solomon's prayer at the dedication of the temple began with a reference to God as One who keeps covenant (1 Kings 8:23), and Leviticus 26 also refers to God's covenant. Daniel was acquainted with these passages. He had also read about God's covenants in Jeremiah 31.

William Tyndale, who lost his life translating the Bible in the sixteenth century, gave a splendid definition of prayer in his comment on Jacob's prayer in Genesis 32:9-12. It reminds us to remember God's promises when we pray:

Prayer is to cleave unto the promises of God  
 with a strong faith,  
 And to beseech God  
 with a fervent desire  
 That he will fulfill them  
 for his truth and mercy only.

It's a good definition. Remembering as we begin our prayers that God keeps His promises helps us to have the kind of faith He can respond to.

Now that we have looked at Daniel's notable prayer, let us look on the next page at the answer God sent him.

### PRAYER IN THE BIBLE

#### Some notable prayers in the Bible

Moses' prayer of intercession. Exodus 32:31, 32.  
 Hannah's prayer for a child. 1 Samuel 1:4-18.  
 David's prayer of confession. Psalm 51.  
 Some other prayer psalms. Psalms 17; 86; 90; 102.  
 Solomon's prayer at the dedication of the temple. 1 Kings 8:22-53.  
 Elijah's prayer on Mount Carmel. 1 Kings 18:36, 37.  
 Elisha's prayer in Dothan. 2 Kings 6:17.  
 Jehoshaphat's prayer in crisis. 2 Chronicles 20:5-12.  
 Christ's sample prayer (the Lord's Prayer, Our Father). Matthew 9:9-13.  
 Christ's intercessory prayer. John 17.  
 Christ's prayer in Gethsemane. Matthew 26:36-46.  
 Christ's prayer on the cross. Luke 23:46.  
 The disciples prayer at sea. Matthew 8:25.  
 The last prayers in the Bible. Revelation 22:20, 21.

#### Other notable references to prayer

##### *Old Testament*

Leviticus 26:40-45  
 1 Samuel 7:5  
 1 Kings 18:41-46  
 2 Chronicles 33:13  
 Jeremiah 29:7

##### *New Testament*

Matthew 5:44	Romans 10:1
Matthew 6:5-8	2 Corinthians 12:7-10
Luke 1:13; 6:12	Ephesians 1:16
Acts 1:14	Philippians 1:19
Acts 16:25	James 5:14-18

#### Principles of effective prayer

Faith in God and His promises. Matthew 21:21, 22; Hebrews 11:6.  
 Persistence. Luke 11:5-13; 18:1-8.  
 Earnestness. Jeremiah 29:13, 14.  
 Forgiving spirit. Matthew 6:14, 15.  
 Right home relationship. 1 Peter 3:7.  
 Humility. Luke 18:10-14.  
 Unselfishness. James 4:3.  
 Attitude of obedience to God. Proverbs 15:29; 28:9.  
 Submission to God's will. Matthew 6:10; 26:39.  
 Dependence on Jesus Christ. John 14:13, 14.  
 Desire for advance of God's kingdom. Matthew 6:9, 10.

#### Kinds of prayer

Prayers express praise, gratitude, complaint, submission, as well as request.

## II. Date of the Cross Foretold

When the Lord Jesus Christ strode into the villages of Galilee, He electrified the people with His dramatic proclamation, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand." Mark 1:15.

We want to know, What did Jesus mean by the words, "*The time is fulfilled*"?

What did Paul mean by saying, "*When the time had fully come*, God sent forth his Son, born of a woman"? Galatians 4:4.

And what did Paul have in mind when he spoke about the new, eternal life which God "promised ages ago and at *the proper time* manifested in his word"? Titus 1:2, 3.

Jesus and Paul were aware that God had appointed a set time, and they knew that it had arrived. The angel Gabriel had announced this set time in the astonishingly accurate prediction which he gave to Daniel at the close of Daniel 9.

More than half a millennium in advance, Gabriel's daring prophecy had foretold the very year in which Jesus would be baptized and also when He would be crucified! Much more even than that, it explained *why* Jesus would come. He would come to have success with a covenant with His people. He would die to put an end to sin and would bring in everlasting righteousness. Even His resurrection was implied in the prophecy, for after making an end of sin He would "**anoint a most holy place.**"

But we must not get ahead of ourselves. Let us advance perceptively a step at a time.

*The link between Daniel 8 and Daniel 9.* It is basic to keep on remembering that Daniel 9 explains Daniel 8:14, and that Daniel 8 and 9 form a unit.

When Gabriel appeared, Daniel recognized that he was the same person "**whom I had seen in the vision at the first.**"

Gabriel's opening sentence was, "**O Daniel, I have now come out to give you wisdom and understanding.**"

After paying Daniel the compliment of calling him a man "**greatly beloved,**" Gabriel added, "**therefore consider the word and understand the vision.**"

Gabriel had been commissioned to "**make this man understand the vision**" of chapter 8. He had, within that chapter, explained everything except verse 14, with its references to the cleansing of the sanctuary and to the 2300 evening-and-morning days. Daniel had not needed an explanation of the cleansing of the sanctuary, but the 2300 days perplexed him. Were they literal days (as he must have hoped), or were they symbolic like the other items in Daniel 8:3-14 and like the days in Ezekiel 4:6? And if they did refer to 2300 *years*, was God saying that the *tamid* services at the Jerusalem temple would not be restored for 2300 years? If so, what about Jeremiah's prophecy of only 70 years?

Daniel was concerned about the calculation of time.

Gabriel began his explanation with a statement about time.

*The seventy weeks cut off.* Said Gabriel, "**Seventy weeks of years are decreed**

concerning your people and your holy city, to finish the transgression, to put an end to sin, and to atone for iniquity, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal both vision and prophet, and to anoint a most holy place.” Daniel 9:24.

Seventy *weeks* of years! Daniel had been looking at a prophecy by Jeremiah that talked about seventy years. Now Gabriel was speaking about a period seven times as long. Commentators are virtually unanimous in saying that Gabriel meant 490 years ( $70 \times 7$  years).<sup>2</sup>

And these 490 years were “**decreed**,” says the R.S.V. The New English Bible has “**marked out**.” The K.J.V. has “**determined**.”

The underlying Hebrew term is *chathak* (kah-thak). It is another once-in-the-Bible word, like *nitsdaq* (page 175).

But even though *chathak* is used only this once in the Bible, it is well known to scholars from its usage outside the Bible. The well-known Hebrew-English dictionary by Gesenius says that properly it means to “cut” or to “divide.” Ancient rabbis used it as meaning to “amputate.”<sup>3</sup>

Translators know that *chathak* means to cut, divide, and amputate, but they haven’t always understood how to make sense out of a literal translation, and so they have proposed a variety of alternatives, including not only “marked out” and “determined” and “decreed” but also “foreshortened,” and others.

It is best to let the word be itself. Gabriel had come to explain the 2300 days. He began his explanation by announcing that 490 years were to be “cut” or “ampu-

*While Daniel was still praying, Gabriel arrived to answer his request about the restoration of the sanctuary.*



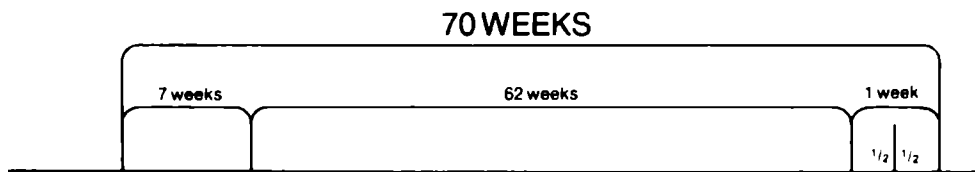
tated" from the longer period. The matter is as simple as that.

Here is the answer to Daniel's lingering question about the length of the 2300 days. Inasmuch as 490 years cannot be "cut" away from 2300 literal days, which add up to less than 7 years, the solution is clear. The 2300 days are indeed symbolic and stand for 2300 actual years.

Daniel of course still wanted to know when the 2300 years were to begin, in order to calculate when they would end. Certainly we want to have this information too.

Gabriel would provide it in a moment.

*The seventy weeks segmented.* First, though, we need to note that in verses 25 to 27 Gabriel trisected the 70 weeks into three unequal segments consisting of 7 weeks (49 years), 62 weeks (434 years), and 1 week (7 years). He subdivided the final week further into halves ( $3\frac{1}{2}$  years each). A diagram can help:



*The seventy weeks begun.* Verse 25 says, "**Know therefore and understand**"—there is that crucial verb again, "**understand**"—"that from the going forth of the word to restore and build Jerusalem to the coming of an anointed one, a prince, there shall be seven weeks."

Daniel must have been encouraged to learn that there really would be a decree issued some day authorizing the restoration of Jerusalem! Can we find out anything more about this decree?

Yes; in fact we need to look at three decrees, all preserved for us by Ezra the scribe.

1. The first of these three decrees, issued in 538 (or possibly 537) by Cyrus the Great, permitted a resettlement of the Jewish exiles in their homeland and empowered them to build for God "a house at Jerusalem." Ezra 1:2-4. In connection with this decree Cyrus released the sacred utensils that Nebuchadnezzar had carried to Babylon—and which Belshazzar had blasphemously drunk from on the night when Cyrus defeated him, only a year or two prior to this decree. There were 5469 of them. Ezra 1:7-11.

Some fifty thousand Jews returned to Palestine within a year. They ran into stiff opposition from the non-Jewish inhabitants of the area. The record in the books of Ezra and Nehemiah sounds almost like a modern newscast from the Middle East!

In the face of this opposition, work on the temple dragged (see Ezra, chapters 2 to 5).

2. The second of the three decrees was issued around 519 by Darius I Hys-



taspes (not to be confused with Darius the Mede). Shortly after Darius began to reign, he received a letter asking him to confirm the original decree made by Cyrus. Darius ordered a thorough search of the Persian archives in Babylonia and Ecbatana, and when an official memo of the decree was at last recovered (Ezra 6:1-5), he cheerfully issued the requested confirmation (Ezra 6:6-12).

3. The third decree was issued by Artaxerxes I Longimanus. ("Longimanus" refers to the length of his hands.) Qualitatively, this third decree (Ezra 7:11-26) was superior to the first two, for it commissioned Ezra to appoint magistrates and judges with full political and religious authority to try cases under both Jewish and Persian law and to impose capital punishment. Said Artaxerxes:

You, Ezra, according to the wisdom of your God which is in your hand, *appoint magistrates and judges* who may judge all the people in the province Beyond the River, all such as know the laws of your God; and those who do not know them, you shall teach. Whoever will not obey *the law of your God and the law of the king*, let judgment be strictly executed upon him, whether for death or for banishment or for confiscation of his goods or for imprisonment. Ezra 7:25, 26.

In his report Ezra says that he gathered together a group of potential leaders, traveled with them from Babylonia to Jerusalem, arrived in Palestine in the fifth month of Artaxerxes's seventh year, and, at some unspecified time thereafter, *When implemented in 457 B.C., the decree Ezra received from Artaxerxes marked the beginning of the seventy weeks and the 2300 year-days.*



“delivered the king’s commissions to the king’s satraps and to the governors of the province Beyond the River.” Ezra 8:36. He also says that the temple was finally completed according to the “*decree* of Cyrus, and Darius, and Artaxerxes.” Ezra 6:14. His reference to the three documents by the singular word “*decree*” indicates the unity of the decrees. It also calls attention to the third one, without which the first two were incomplete.

For it was this third decree—the decree of the seventh year of Artaxerxes—which gave Jerusalem its legal rebirth. It was this third decree, authorizing the appointment of magistrates and judges and, in particular, reestablishing Jewish law as a basis of local government, which made possible the restoration of Jerusalem as a capital.

Hence it was this third decree that Gabriel had in mind when he spoke of a decree to “**restore and build Jerusalem.**”

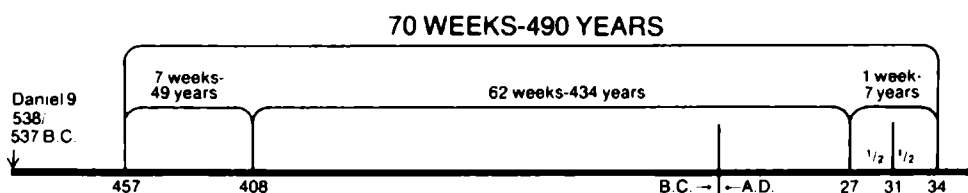
Now, can this decree be dated?

Beyond a doubt.

As we have seen, Ezra implemented the decree at some time after his arrival in Palestine in the fifth month of the seventh year of Artaxerxes’s reign. Because the Jewish months were numbered from spring to spring (see pages 44-46), the fifth month in old Jerusalem fell somewhere between mid-July and mid-September on our calendar (depending on the timing of New Year’s day in any given year; see pages 249-255). The fifth month of the seventh year of Artaxerxes fell in the late summer or early autumn of 457 B.C., and the decree was implemented soon afterward.

We now have the date when the seventy weeks began: the autumn of 457 B.C.

With this anchor secured, it is a simple matter to calculate each of the other dates for our chart. Seven weeks (49 years) from 457 B.C. bring us to 408 B.C. Seventy weeks (490 years) from the autumn of 457 B.C. bring us to A.D. 34. Counting one week (7 years) back from A.D. 34 brings us to A.D. 27. Counting forward again  $3\frac{1}{2}$  years bring us to A.D. 31.\*



We will return to these dates shortly and examine the evidence for fulfillment in each case. First, though, we’ll need to understand more about the purpose of the seventy weeks and about the events which were to occur on the different dates.

In view of his deeply spiritual prayer, Daniel had reason to anticipate a deeply

\*For more on the calculation of A.D. 31 (and on a different dating of the seventy weeks from another decree in 445 or 444) see *Your Questions Answered*, pages 243-245. If your private calculations say that the 490 years ran from 457 B.C. to A.D. 33 instead of the A.D. 34, see *Your Questions Answered*, page 246.

spiritual answer. He was not disappointed. As we shall see, Gabriel's response in Daniel 9:24-27 went far beyond anything Daniel had requested.

Daniel 9:24-27 is an inspired passage of such great vitality and informational density that we shall want to analyze it very closely.

*Daniel 9:24 as introduction.* Daniel 9:24 separates itself naturally from the rest of the passage. It is an introduction to verses 25-27. It states, in extremely terse language, what it was that God planned to achieve during the seventy weeks. **"Seventy weeks of years,"** it says, **"are decreed [amputated, cut off] concerning your people and your holy city, to finish the transgression, to put an end to sin, and to atone for iniquity, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal both vision and prophet, and to anoint a most holy place."**

We have reminded ourselves several times already that Daniel 9:24-27 was given to help explain the prophecy of Daniel 8:14, which said that at the end of 2300 days the sanctuary would be **"restored to its rightful state,"** or cleansed. We have already mentioned that the time period, 70 weeks, throws light on the time period, 2300 days. Now we notice that the phrases **"put an end to sin,"** **"atone for iniquity,"** and **"anoint a most holy place"** are plainly sanctuary language. Gabriel is truly helping us to understand the sanctuary prophecy of Daniel 8:14!

*Daniel 9:24 as work of art.* If you could read Hebrew (and it may be that you can), you would be delighted by the precision with which Daniel 9:24 has been crafted.<sup>4</sup> It is subdivided into two parallel groups, one consisting of two-word units and the other of three-word units.\* Further, between the two groups is a remarkable wordplay, or serious pun. Let me *paraphrase* the verse in an attempt to carry its literary form into English.

Two-word Units		Three-word Units	
	Seventy weeks of years are decreed [cut off] concerning		
	<i>your people</i>		<i>your holy city</i>
	to—		to—
A	finish transgression	B	introduce everlasting righteousness
A'	seal† sins	B'	seal† vision, prophet
A"	expiate iniquity‡	B"	anoint holy sanctuary

But let us catch our breath. We want to study prophecy, and we find ourselves doing linguistics!

In Daniel 8 we studied *tamid* in order to understand the continual ministry of Christ which the medieval church obscured. We also studied *nitsdaq* in order to

\*The R.S.V. attempts to convey the presence of the two groups by the dual use of the conjunction "and" in the middle of the verse ("and to atone for iniquity") and at the end of the verse ("and to anoint a most holy place").

†Wordplay, or serious pun. ("To seal sins" is a literal translation of the Hebrew words translated "to put an end to sin" in the R.S.V.)

‡"Expiate Iniquity" is a paraphrase for "atone for iniquity."

understand how the sanctuary was to be made right, restored, or cleansed. Without word studies like these, many people over the centuries have supposed that Daniel 8 focuses on the heathen king Antiochus Epiphanes rather than on our great High Priest, Jesus Christ!

And by not learning about the literary structure of Daniel 9:24-27, some people today teach that something very important will be done *against* God's saints in the future by *antichrist* that was actually done *for* them *nineteen hundred years ago* by *Jesus Christ*!

If a few moments with word study and literary structure can help us avoid misunderstandings like these, the effort is eminently worth our while!

*Basic principles of Hebrew literary style.* Very well, let us devote a few brief moments to five basic aspects of Hebrew literary style involved in an understanding of the seventy-week prophecy. Remember that Hebrew people loved their language. They found great beauty in its inner rhythms. When they were the most earnest, they paid the closest attention to style. Their greatest prophets were great poets. They even punned seriously.

One of the most pleasant ways for you to introduce yourself to Hebrew literary form, in preparation for a serious analysis of Daniel 9:24-27, would be to get a group of people together—your own family would be fine—and read a few psalms out loud the way the Israelites did years ago. As a starter, Psalm 107:23-32, 43 is printed for you on page 205, arranged as you might use it in a Sunday School class or in your home. I have chosen the K.J.V. because its translation of this passage is so famous.

If you *can* arrange to have a group read Bible poetry with you, you may like to help them visualize themselves standing in two groups facing each other under the Palestinian sun, with the leader standing at one end of the space between them backed by musicians with trumpets and cymbals. Rendering a passage back and



forth by two groups is called "antiphonal," from a Greek word that means "voice over against voice."

Antiphonal grouping is no gimmick! The musical heart of Hebrew is the parallel representation of an idea in two or more adjacent lines. When two groups of people do the reading, one group reads the first statement of an idea and the other group reads its parallel. The attractive parallel repetitions come in different kinds. Some examples will make them clear.

1. *Synonymous parallels*. In the most common kind of parallel the idea is simply restated in different words. For instance:

A     He maketh the storm a calm,  
A'     so that the waves thereof are still.

**PSALM 107:23-32, 43, K.J.V.**

Boys: They that go down to the sea in ships,  
Girls: that do business in great waters;  
Boys: These see the works of the Lord,  
Girls: and his wonders in the deep.  
Boys: For he commandeth, and raiseth the stormy wind,  
Girls: Which lifteth up the waves thereof.  
Boy A: They mount up to the heaven,  
Boy B: They go down again to the depths:  
Girls: Their soul is melted because of trouble.  
Boy A: They reel to and fro.  
Boy B: and stagger like a drunken man,  
Girls: and are at their wit's end.

Girl A: He maketh the storm a calm,  
Girl B: so that the waves thereof are still.  
Girl A: Then are they glad because they be quiet;  
Girl B: so he bringeth them unto their haven desired.

Boy A: Let them exalt him also in the congregation of the people,  
Boy B: and praise him in the assembly of the elders.

**Leader: Whoso is wise, and will observe to these things,  
even they shall understand the lovingkindness of the Lord.**

2. *Antithetical Parallels*. Sometimes the second line *contrasts* with the first. Psalm 1:6 is a good example:

A     The Lord knows the way of the righteous,  
B       but the way of the wicked will perish.

3. *Synthetic parallels*. Sometimes the second line simply *adds* to or *completes* the thought of the first line.

4. *Alternating parallels*. As you become more aware of what to look for, you will often find two related ideas *alternating* with each other and *extending through* several verses. Psalm 37:3-5 provides an illustration.

A            Trust in the Lord, and do good;  
B            so you will dwell in the land, and enjoy security.

A'          Take delight in the Lord,  
B'          and he will give you the desires of your heart.

A"          Commit your way to the Lord; trust in him,  
B"          and he will act.

Perhaps you would like to reread our selection from Psalm 107 just now and see how expert you have already become at recognizing the different kinds of parallels. If you haven't mastered their technical names yet, look for pairs and other groups of lines that are (1) similar, (2) contrasting, (3) completing, and (4) alternating.

After you have begun to find your way through the book of Psalms, you will want to look at the prophetic books like Isaiah and Jeremiah. You will find that large portions of them are written in the same style as the book of Psalms. Isaiah 53, a spiritual gem anyway, takes on new pathos and depth when you are conscious of its poetic parallel structure. On pages 69, 70 we discussed the fact that Nebuchadnezzar used poetic style in Daniel 4 and in some of his known official cuneiform inscriptions.

5. *Chiasms*. Once in awhile, as you read your Bible, you will discover, with the joy of a Frenchman finding truffles, that you have happened onto a chiasm. A "chiasm" (pronounced KIE-asm) consists of a pair of contrasting ideas that suddenly reverse their direction, like partners at a square dance. There are two exquisite chiasms in Daniel 9:24-27; but since an understanding of them is not essential to an understanding of the seventy-week prophecy, they are not discussed here but are taken up in *Your Questions Answered*, pages 247, 248.

*The purpose of the seventy weeks*. With this brief introduction behind us, let us look again at Daniel 9:24, *paraphrased* as we did it a moment ago in order to bring out its literary structure.

Seventy weeks of years are decreed [cut off] concerning

*your people*

*your holy city*

to—

to—

A finish transgression

B introduce everlasting righteousness

A' seal\* sins

B' seal\* vision, prophet

A" expiate iniquity†

B' anoint holy sanctuary

As we look at the verse again now, we are struck by the relationships that exist among the various lines. For instance, the *B* lines answer to the *A* lines either by “contrast” or by “completion.” The purpose of the seventy weeks is shown as *A* to finish transgression and *B* to begin everlasting righteousness; *A'* to seal sins and *B'* to seal the vision and the prophet; *A''* to atone for iniquity and *B''* to anoint the holy sanctuary.

We also notice a “synonymous parallel” relationship among the *A* lines and among the *B* lines. The three parallel clauses in the *A* section form a single repeated statement. They say that all kinds of sins (transgression, sin, and iniquity—see Leviticus 16:21) are to be finished and sealed off by means of the atonement. How often our compassionate God has repeated His promise to take away the sins of the world (John 1:29), to remove our sins as far as the east is from the west (Psalm 103:12), and to make our scarlet sins as white as snow (Isaiah 1:18)! God’s basic purpose for the seventy weeks is *atonement*.

The *B* section of Daniel 9:24 appears at first glance to be more complex than the *A* section, but it still conveys a unified concept. It does not deal merely with the Jewish temple that Daniel had been praying about! It deals also with the heavenly holy city, New Jerusalem (Revelation 21:2), the “mother of us all” (Galatians 4:26, K.J.V.).

It *must* deal with the heavenly sanctuary and the *tamid* (priestly ministry) which Jesus performs there! Christ’s heavenly ministry, along with His death on the cross, is essential to the “everlasting righteousness” of verse 24. The heavenly sanctuary is the principal focus of the vision of Daniel 8, which Daniel 9:24-27 is intended to explain. And it is the heavenly sanctuary, not the Jerusalem temple, which Jesus purifies with His blood. Hebrews 9:11-26.

The book of Hebrews is a great help to the understanding of Daniel 9:24. Hebrews 9:26 speaks about Jesus as having to “*put away sin* by the sacrifice of himself.” This statement corresponds obviously to the *A* part of Daniel 9:24, “**to finish the transgression, to put an end to sin, and to atone for iniquity.**” Hebrews also reminds us to look to Jesus Christ as the “source of eternal salvation” (Hebrews 5:9)—counsel that corresponds to God’s promise in Daniel 9:24 that the Messiah would “**bring in everlasting righteousness.**”

The book of Hebrews teaches too that Jesus, after His resurrection, ascended

\*Wordplay, or serious pun. (“To seal sins” is a literal translation of the Hebrew words translated “to put an end to sin” in the R.S.V.)

†Remember that “expiate iniquity” is a paraphrase for “atone for iniquity.”

to serve as our High Priest in the heavenly sanctuary. Before the priests commenced their service in the earthly sanctuary, the sanctuary was “anointed” in a special ceremony. Leviticus 8:10, 11. Similarly we may understand from Daniel 9:24 that as Jesus commenced His ministry in the heavenly sanctuary, He first undertook to “**anoint a most holy place.**”

The R.S.V. translation “**anoint a most holy place**” does not mean that Jesus anointed only the innermost area of the heavenly sanctuary (see pages 175-178). The word “place” is not used in the *original* language of Daniel 9:24. In the Bible many things associated with the sanctuary are called “most holy,” including the altar of burnt offering (Exodus 29:37), the golden altar (Exodus 30:10), sin offerings (Leviticus 6:29), and incense (Exodus 30:36). What Jesus anointed upon His ascension to heaven after His resurrection was the heavenly sanctuary as a whole.

Before we leave the literary structure of Daniel 9:24, we must satisfy our curiosity about the wordplay, or pun, in lines *A'* and *B'*. In Line *A'* “**seal**” is used in the sense of sealing an envelope in order to show that the letter is finished. When Jesus applies His more-than-sufficient atonement, sins are finished with. In line *B'* “**seal**” is used in the sense of sealing a document to guarantee its authenticity. The fulfillment of the seventy-week prophecy as outlined in verses 25-27 was to be so spiritually significant and so strikingly timely that it would confirm, or guarantee, or “seal,” the fulfillment of the 2300-day prophecy of which it is a part.

Daniel sought a spiritual answer to his prayer, and he received a spiritual answer beyond his expectations. He asked forgiveness for the Jewish sins that had caused the demolition of Solomon’s temple. God promised forgiveness and removal of *all* His people’s sins. Daniel prayed for the restoration of the Jewish temple. God pointed him to the anointing of the heavenly sanctuary which Christ would accomplish in connection with His atonement.

Reduced to a single sentence, the *A* part of Daniel 9:24 tells us that within the seventy-week period atonement for all sins would be provided for. Reduced to a single sentence, the *B* part tells us that just as surely as the seventy-week prophecy would be fulfilled, Jesus would anoint a new sanctuary and provide a high-priestly ministry that would offer eternal righteousness.

These concepts will become clearer as we continue our study. As we do so, let us remember that the promise of Daniel 9:24 is for us today. In Christ we can die to habitual sin and taste everlasting righteousness right now. Christ puts selfishness to death and gives us altogether new lives.

“Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life.” Romans 6:3, 4.

Do you feel that you have been “kidnapped” by some unhealthful or immoral habit? Jesus paid your “ransom” at Calvary. 1 Timothy 2:6. Go free—and as you walk in faith, your confidence in His promises will increase, and you will gain more consistent victories.



Is your marriage in trouble? Christ can save it. He came long ago to forgive; He lives today to help. He can put an end to bickering and jealousy. As you trust Him to answer your prayers, He will give you a new ability to love and forgive. In Christ we do not need to go looking for new spouses. He can turn us into renewed spouses.

“If any one is in Christ, he is a new creation.” 2 Corinthians 5:17.

*The events of the seventy weeks.* We have looked at verse 24, which states God’s purposes for the seventy weeks. Now let us look at verses 25-27 which outline the events for the seventy weeks along with other events that are not confined to the seventy weeks but are related to them.

The R.S.V. is for the most part an excellent translation of the Bible. Unfortunately it is flawed in its translation of the “seven weeks” and the “sixty-two weeks” (see *Your Questions Answered*, pages 246-247). Because of this weakness in the R.S.V., the New American Standard Bible (N.A.S.B.) is at this point more useful:

**25. So you are to know and discern that from the issuing of a decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem until Messiah the Prince there will be seven weeks and sixty-two weeks; it will be built again, with plaza and moat, even in times of distress.**

**26. Then after the sixty-two weeks the Messiah will be cut off and have nothing, and the people of the prince who is to come will destroy the city and the sanctuary. And its end will come with a flood; even to the end there will be war; desolations are determined.**

**27. And he will make a firm covenant with the many for one week, but in the middle of the week he will put a stop to sacrifice and grain offering\*; and on the wing of abominations will come one who makes desolate, even until a complete destruction, one that is decreed, is poured out on the one who makes desolate. Daniel 9:25-27, N.A.S.B.**

Now let us look at this passage laid out with appropriate headings so as to expose its literary organization. It is well worth rereading in any case. The lines under the *A* headings constitute the first half of each of the three verses; the *B* lines are the second half. You will notice quickly that although the passage is not Hebrew *poetry*, it makes use of the extended alternating parallels, wordplays, and other stylistic features of the Hebrew language. These will be of considerable assistance as we attempt to discover what the passage means.

*A Messiah Prince to come*

[ 1 ] So you are to know and discern that from the issuing  
of a decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem  
until Messiah the Prince

\*Cereal, or grain offerings were often required, either along with or at least at the time when an animal was offered. They consisted some times of a baked loaf or of ingredients for making a loaf (see, for example, Leviticus 2:1-11; 6:14-19, etc.).

[ 2] there will be seven weeks\*  
and sixty-two weeks;

*B The city to be rebuilt*

[ 1] it will be built again, with plaza and moat,†  
[ 2] even in times of distress.

*A' Messiah to be cut off*

[ 2] Then after sixty-two weeks\*

[ 1] the Messiah will be cut off and have nothing,

*B' Desolater prince to destroy the city*

[ 1] and the people of the prince who is to come  
will destroy the city and the sanctuary.

[ 2] And its end will come with a flood;  
even to the end there will be war;  
desolations are determined.†

*A" Messiah to terminate sacrifices*

[ 1] And he will make [keep] a firm covenant with the many

[ 2] for one week,\*

[ 2']but in the middle of the week\*

[ 1']he will put a stop to

sacrifice and grain offering;

*B" The desolater prince to be destroyed*

[ 2] and on the wing of abominations  
will come one who makes desolate,

[ 1] even until a complete destruction,  
one that is decreed,†

is poured out on the one who makes desolate.

Do you see how the sections under the *B* headings alternate and contrast with the sections under the *A* headings? Do you also see that each of the *A* sections is subdivided into statements [1] about the Messiah and [2] about "weeks"? And that the *B* sections, which introduce us to the desolater prince, are subdivided into statements [1] about construction and destruction and [2] about distress and desolation?

The unity of the *A* sections is enhanced by a play on the word "week," which appears in each verse and which comes through very clearly in translation. In the *B* sections there is a play on the Hebrew word for "cut," which, unfortunately, doesn't come through at all in translation. Believe it or not, "moat," "determined," and "decreed" are all translated from the same Hebrew root meaning "cut."

Did you observe the sequence [1][2][2'] [1'] in the *A* section of verse 27? A complex chiasm is lurking there. You can read about it, if you like, under *Your Questions Answered*, pages 247, 248.

\*Wordplay in Hebrew    †Wordplay in Hebrew

We have seen enough to recognize that the two columns, *A* and *B*, though related to each other, are *sufficiently independent to stand alone*. The *A* column says that at predetermined times during the seventieth week the Messiah Prince will arrive on the scene, will keep covenant with many people, will be killed, and will cause sacrifices to cease. The *B* column says that the history of Jerusalem will be a troubled one. Its rebuilding will be accompanied by distress. A desolater prince will destroy it again, and then the desolater himself will be destroyed in a predetermined destruction.

The events in the *A* column are unmistakably and intimately related to the seventy weeks. They are expressly dated to the seventy weeks, and they fit the *spiritual* purposes of the seventy weeks as announced in verse 24. The events in the *B* column, however, are not expressly timed to the seventy weeks. They imply that the Holy City, Jerusalem, will be rebuilt within the allotted time, providing a place for Messiah to appear; but they are not explicitly dated.\* Neither do they directly fulfill the spiritual purposes of the seventy weeks as announced in verse 24.

Because the *B* sections of verses 25-27 are so much in contrast to the *A* sections and to verse 24, we can helpfully organize the four verses of Gabriel's prophecy, in simplified fashion, to look like this:

THE SEVENTY WEEKS (DANIEL 9:24-27) ANALYZED	
<b>GOD'S PURPOSE (9:24)</b>	
<i>A</i> Termination of sin through atonement	
<i>B</i> Introduction of everlasting righteousness [through the cross at Jerusalem and the sanctuary in heaven]	
<b><i>A</i> EVENTS FOR THE MESSIAH DURING THE 70 WEEKS (9:25-27)</b>	<b><i>B</i> EVENTS RELATED TO THE 70 WEEKS BUT NOT CONFINED TO THEM (9:25-27)</b>
<i>At the end of 7 + 62 weeks</i>	
Messiah to arrive	
<i>After the 7 + 62 weeks</i>	<i>Jerusalem to be restored in difficult times</i>
Messiah to be cut off	<i>Jerusalem to be destroyed by a desolater prince</i>
<i>During the 70th week</i>	<i>The desolater prince himself to be destroyed</i>
Messiah to keep covenant	
<i>In the middle of the 70th week</i>	
Messiah to stop sacrifices	

\*Some commentaries hold that the year 408, at the close of the "seven" weeks, marks the completion of the restoration of Jerusalem. Unfortunately historical records from Palestine for the period around 408 are too scanty for this concept to be verified. In any case the angel did not say that the city would be finished at the end of the seven weeks. In fact he gave no specific event to mark the close of either the seven weeks or the seventy weeks.

*Two princes in conflict.* One of the principal advantages we can gain from our literary study of Daniel 9:24-27 is the proper identification of the person referred to by the pronoun “**he**” in verse 27, who keeps covenant and stops sacrifices.

Verse 25 promises the arrival of the Messiah Prince, and verse 26 speaks of a prince whose people will destroy the city and the sanctuary. It is not surprising that some Bible students have confused the two princes and assumed that they were one and the same. But when we lay out the passage according to the laws of Hebrew literary style we can instantly differentiate two separate princes. The *A* sections of verses 25-27 promise a Messiah Prince, and the *B* sections warn of a desolater prince. Sections *A* and *B* are parallel but *contrasting*.

In verse 27 Gabriel says that “**he will make a firm covenant with the many for one week,**” and that in the middle of the week “**he will put a stop to sacrifice and grain offering.**” Again it is not surprising that through the centuries some Bible students have made the mistake of supposing that this “**he**” is the desolater prince rather than the Messiah Prince. Even the well-known Roman commentator Hippolytus made this mistake in the third century, concluding that it was a future antichrist rather than Jesus Christ who would stop the sacrifices.<sup>5</sup> It is regrettable that Hippolytus’s error is sometimes cited today as if it were the truth.

You know better! You know that the “**he**” who keeps covenant and stops sacrifices is found in the *A* column, along with the references to the seventy weeks. He is not found in the *B* column. He is the Messiah Prince, our Saviour; He is not the desolater. He is Jesus Christ; He is not a future antichrist.

*Jesus Christ as the Messiah Prince.* We have taken for granted that the Messiah Prince was Jesus Christ. The time has come to show that He really was.

A “prince” in the Bible is a prominent leader. Jesus is “God” and “Son of God”; hence He is a prince preeminent. Prince Jesus technically became the Messiah *on the occasion of His baptism*. The Hebrew word “messiah” means “an anointed person.” The Greek word “christ” also means “an anointed person.” It was customary in Bible times for individuals who were selected for prominent leadership to be ordained to their roles by being anointed with oil. For example, David was anointed by Samuel to be a *king* (1 Samuel 16:1, 13), Aaron was anointed by Moses to be a *priest* (Exodus 30:30), and Elisha was anointed by Elijah to be a *prophet* (1 Kings 19:16).

Jesus, who was both a king, a priest, and a prophet, was anointed by God at His baptism in the River Jordan when the Holy Spirit descended upon Him in the shape of a dove. Luke 3:21, 22; Acts 10:37, 38. One of John the Baptist’s disciples soon searched out his brother Peter and announced with conviction, “We have found the Messiah.” John 1:41, 42. A little later when preaching one Sabbath in the Nazareth synagogue, Jesus applied to Himself the Messianic prophecy of Isaiah 61:1, 2.

The Spirit of the Lord is upon me  
Because he has anointed me  
to preach good news to the poor.

He has sent me  
 to proclaim release to the captives  
 and recovering of sight to the blind,  
 to set at liberty those who are oppressed,  
 to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord. Luke 4:18, 19.

Inasmuch as God anointed Jesus to proclaim liberty, to restore sight, and to preach the good news of forgiveness and a fresh start, it is no wonder that Hebrews 1:9 says that God anointed Him with the "oil of gladness." Joy is a "fruit of the Spirit" (Galatians 5:22), and Jesus was "*full of the Holy Spirit*" (Luke 4:1). Wherever Jesus went, He brought joy.

Everyone suffering from disease or a handicap rejoiced at His touch. Mourners rejoiced when He resurrected their dead. Guilt-plagued people breathed sighs of relief. Everywhere Jesus made people happy. He was anointed with the oil of gladness. He was the Messiah of happiness!

When the woman at Jacob's well said, "I know that Messiah is coming," Jesus responded, "I who speak to you am he." John 4:25, 26.

So we have His word for it. Jesus was the Messiah promised in the Old Testament. And because the name "Christ" means the same as "Messiah," every time we call Him, "*Jesus Christ*," we acknowledge the fact that He is the Messiah.

*Jesus as the terminator of sacrifices.* We have seen that in Daniel 9:24-27 Gabriel predicted that the Messiah would "**put a stop to sacrifice and grain offering**" (N.A.S.B.); in other words, that He would "**cause sacrifice and offering to cease**" (R.S.V.).

You may wonder how this prophecy can have been fulfilled by Jesus in view of the fact that Jewish priests continued to burn sacrifices and to make other types of offerings until the Romans destroyed their temple in A.D. 70, almost forty years after the crucifixion.

The book of Hebrews gives the answer. It describes Jesus as truly the terminator of sacrifices. It says that through His incarnation and death He "abolishes" the old sacrifices. Weymouth says that He "does away with" them. The New English Bible has, He "annuls" them. Hebrews 10:4-9 leaves no doubt about this:

For it is impossible that the blood of bulls and goats  
 should take away sins. Consequently, when Christ  
 came into the world, he said,  
 "Sacrifices and offerings thou hast not desired,  
 but a body hast thou prepared for me;  
 in burnt offerings and sin offerings  
 thou hast taken no pleasure.  
 Then I said,  
 'Lo, I have come to do thy will, O God,'  
 as it is written of me in the roll of the book."

When he said above,

“Thou hast neither desired, nor taken pleasure  
in sacrifices and offerings and burnt offerings  
and sin offerings:

(these are offered according to the law),

then he added,

“Lo, I have come to do thy will.”

*He abolishes the first in order to establish the second.*

The author of the book of Hebrews says here that Jesus Christ “abolishes the first [ritual] in order to establish the second.”

But didn’t he know that sacrifices continued to be offered in Jerusalem for many years after Jesus died?

Of course he did! As a matter of fact, he wrote Hebrews while the temple was still very much in use. In the passage we just read he said that the sacrifices and the offerings “*are* offered [present tense] according to the law.” Hebrews 10:8. In Hebrews 10:11 he said that “every priest *stands* daily [present tense] at his service, offering repeatedly the same sacrifices.”

Certainly, yes, the priests did continue to repeat the age-old ritual, and the author of Hebrews was well aware of the fact. But he was also well aware, as an inspired spokesman for God, that their sacrifices *no longer mattered*. They provided religious drama, devoid of saving spiritual significance.

Not to press the matter unduly, we may remind ourselves that various non-Christian religions have continued to offer animal sacrifices until the present day. By His death Jesus did not make the offering of sacrifices impossible. God does not compel anyone to stop the religious burning of animals. But in the sight of heaven Christ’s cross was the Sacrifice to end all sacrifices. With the death of Jesus no ritual sacrifice, Jewish or otherwise, has significance anymore for salvation.

A startling miracle should have taught this lesson to the Jewish priests even though the teachings of the prophets failed to do so. At the very moment when Jesus had “breathed his last,” “the curtain of the temple was torn in two, from top to bottom”! Mark 15:38.

Until that precise instant, entrance into the most holy place had been restricted to the high priest once a year. Now, theoretically, it was open to everyone at any time.

With such dramatic symbolism as this, Heaven said to all the world, “You do not need the Jewish priesthood anymore. Helpful in countless ways as rabbis and Christian priests and ministers may be, you do not *need* them either in order to enter the presence of God. There is only one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus” (see Hebrews 9:15 and 1 Timothy 2:5).

During the seventieth week of Daniel 9 Jesus Christ amply fulfilled the prophecy, “**He shall cause sacrifice and offering to cease.**”

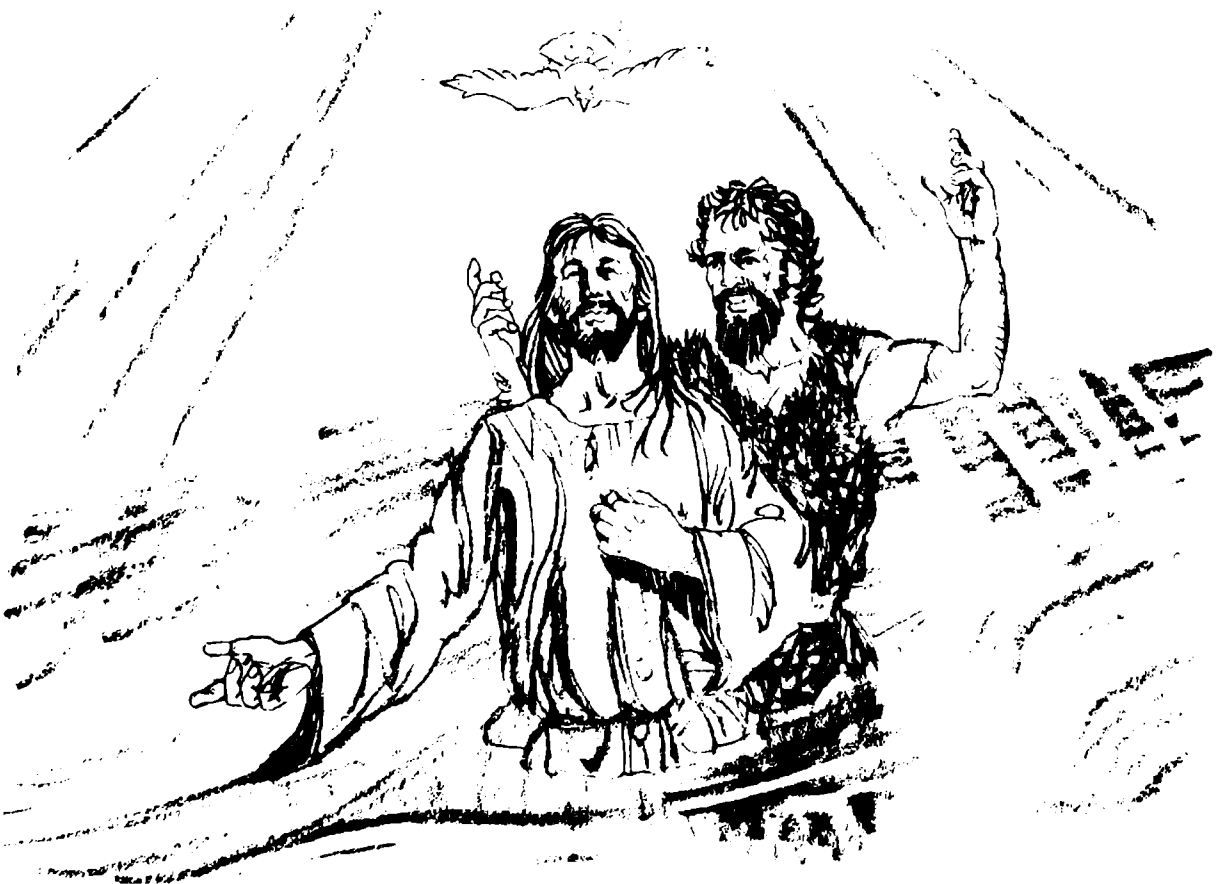
What we are studying sheds light on the possible future course of Jewish sacrifices. Many people are wondering whether it is likely that during a short period just prior to Christ's second coming, God will ask the Jews, in memory of the cross, to restore their animal sacrifices.

The answer from our study of Daniel 9:24-27 is that He most certainly will not. Jesus has done away with animal sacrifices. He has annulled them. He has abolished them. He has **"caused sacrifice and offering to cease."**

*The date of Christ's baptism foretold.* One of the most intriguing aspects of the seventy-week prophecy is its timely fulfillment. According to our chart on page 202 the Messiah was to arrive in the year A.D. 27 and was to cause sacrifice and offering to cease three and a half years later, in the year A.D. 31. So we want to know whether Jesus really was baptized/anointed in A.D. 27 and whether His crucifixion did occur in A.D. 31.

We should notice, incidentally, that Gabriel foretold no specific event to mark the close of the seventy weeks in A.D. 34. We'll discuss A.D. 34 in our next section, "Jesus Kept His Promise."

As soon as we look into the dates 27 and 31, we are struck with something quite remarkable among Bible students. We find a vigorous dispute about the precise dates involved, but a solidly reassuring consensus in respect to the very short period within which all suggested dates are found to fall. A recent investigator from Dallas Theological Seminary has listed more than twenty writers, representing *Jesus' public ministry began with His baptism in A.D. 27.*



ing widely different schools of thought. In spite of their differences, with only one exception, their dates for the crucifixion all fall within the nine-year period, A.D. 27-36.<sup>6</sup> Scholars have no choice except to place the crucifixion into this short period because, indisputably, Jesus was crucified under Pontius Pilate. Even the second-century pagan historian Tacitus says in his *Annals of the Roman Empire*, 15. 44, that Jesus was "executed in Tiberius's reign by the governor of Judaea, Pontius Pilatus." The Bible, of course, indicates the same. Luke 3:1; 23:24.

Pilate served as administrator (sometimes called "procurator") of Judea between the years 26 and 36, and this is the obvious reason that scholars agree on the general period for Christ's death.

Now, the year 31 falls right in the middle of Pilate's term as procurator. If we knew nothing more about the date of the cross than simply that it came near the middle of Pilate's incumbency, we would say that Gabriel's prediction, made from a distance of more than 500 years, was very, very close.

But we do know more than this. Before finalizing on a date for the cross, however, let us look closely at the date of Christ's baptism/anointing.

Jesus was baptized by John the Baptist; and, according to Luke 3:1, John the Baptist commenced his brilliant but very brief ministry in "the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar."

Tiberius Caesar succeeded the famous Roman emperor Augustus, who died on August 19, A.D. 14. (The month of August was named for Augustus.) Even without a master's degree in historical chronology, a person can calculate that the fifteenth year of Tiberius, the year when John the Baptist commenced his ministry, must have begun no later than A.D. 28. And A.D. 28 is very close to A.D. 27, the year we posited a while ago for Christ's baptism/anointing.

But people who specialize in historical chronology tell us that there is good reason to conclude that the fifteenth year of Tiberius began in A.D. 27. You will remember from our discussion on pages 45, 46 that the reigns of kings were usually counted differently in ancient times from the way they are in our own, and that different countries used different seasons (either spring or fall) for beginning each of the years of a reign. As for the Jews, even though they began their *religious* year from the first day of the month Nisan in the spring (sometime in March or April), in the era we are talking about they began the reigns of non-Jewish kings on the Jewish *civil* New Year's Day (Tishri 1, Rosh Hashanah) in the autumn, following the new moon of either September or October. They had also adopted the custom of considering a king's "first year" as the interval between the day he began to reign and the arrival of the following autumn New Year's Day. Jewish clerks, like the clerks in several other eastern Mediterranean lands, began to date documents by a new emperor's "first year" as soon as they heard the news that he had begun to rule.

Tiberius began to rule upon the death of Augustus, which occurred on August 19, A.D. 14. The next Jewish New Year's Day came somewhere between mid-September and mid-October. There was plenty of time for news about the installa-



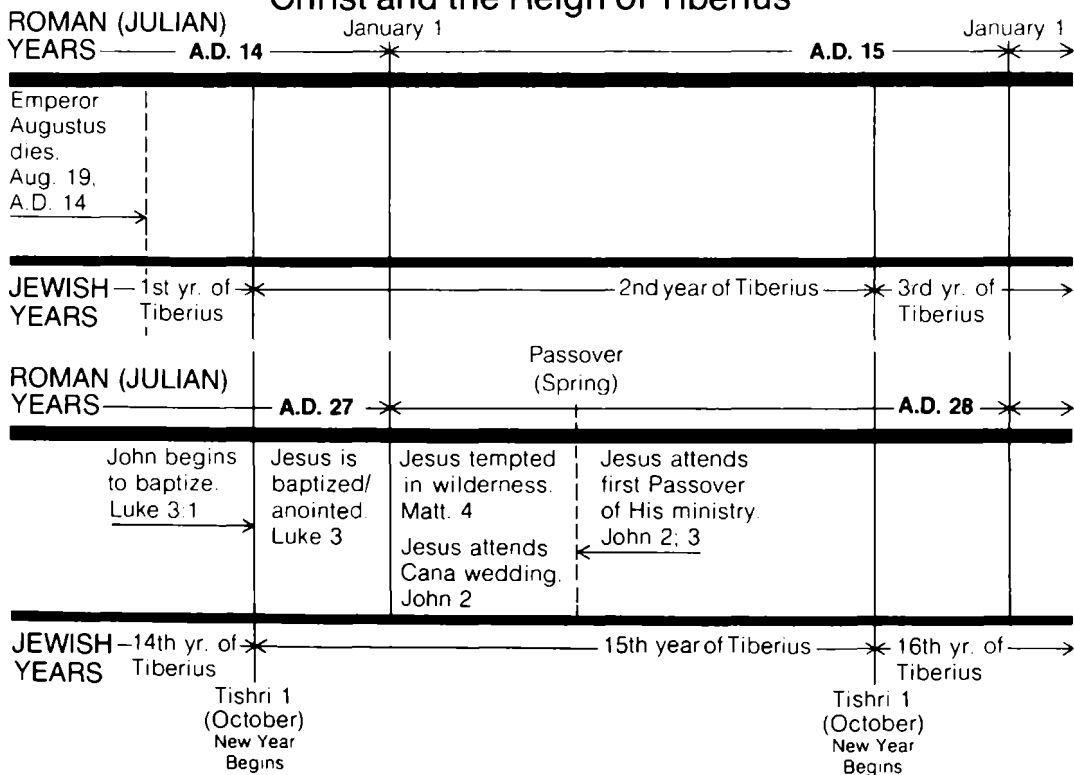
tion of the new emperor to reach Palestine and for the "first year" of his rule to commence there before Jewish New Year's. So it was, according to a custom recorded in the Jewish Mishnah, that the "second year" of Tiberius must have begun in Palestine on New Year's Day in September or October A.D. 14 even though by then Tiberius had been in power for no more than about two months!\*

Fantastic as such a phenomenon may appear to be to Western minds, it is a custom in some Oriental countries even today for children to be considered a year old in the year of their birth and to be two years old on the subsequent New Year's Day. This custom is followed, even if New Year's comes only a day or two after a child is born. Western tourists are puzzled to learn that children who appear to be only six years old, for example, claim to be eight.

On this basis, the "fifteenth year . . . of Tiberius" (Luke 3:1) did not begin in August A.D. 28 as we might suppose on the basis of modern Western calculations. Reckoned "Jewish fashion," as the *Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible* describes the process we have followed here,<sup>7</sup> Tiberius's fifteenth year began in September or October A.D. 27.

\*Archaeologists have found many Palestinian coins from various years of Tiberius's reign, but they have found no Palestinian coins dated in his "first year." This absence of first-year coins can be explained by the extreme shortness of his first year.

### Correlations of Events in the Life of Christ and the Reign of Tiberius



Inasmuch as Jesus was baptized shortly after John began to preach and inasmuch as between His baptism and His first Passover (in the following spring) He spent six weeks in the wilderness of temptation, gathered disciples here and there, and attended the Cana wedding feast, it is perfectly safe to conclude that He was baptized within the year 27. Gabriel's prediction about 69 weeks to the anointing of the Messiah at His baptism in A.D. 27 was fulfilled with astonishing precision.

*The date of the cross foretold.* We return now to the date of Christ's crucifixion. Is there any evidence that Jesus' death occurred in the year that we calculated it would, that is, in A.D. 31?

The forthright answer is that, in the present state of expertise, there is no *absolute* contemporary proof that it did. The Bible provides a clear dateline for His baptism, the "fifteenth year . . . of Tiberius," but it does not expressly identify the date of His death. This is one reason why the commentators do not all agree.

But we have already noted that their differences amount to scarcely a year or two either way. All commentators take into account that the crucifixion occurred, in general, while Pontius Pilate was procurator (A.D. 26-36) and, in particular, at a Passover that fell no more than three or four years later than His baptism.

We are thus very certainly *close* to A.D. 31. A margin of error—if one should even think to call it an error—of only a single year in a prophecy spanning half a millennium would still be deeply impressive. It would represent less than one quarter of one percent!

But it isn't necessary to accept even this slight possible discrepancy, as we shall see as we go along.

Those scholars who settle on the year 30 rather than on the year 31 do so partly by appealing to astronomy. They assume that the Passover always fell on the first full moon after the spring equinox, and they know that astronomers can calculate any full moon in history without much difficulty.

But astronomers themselves insist that they cannot provide the information needed to settle the question of the calendar year of the cross! Either 30 or 31 is possible, they say, depending on a variety of factors. For a discussion of astronomy and the date of the cross, see *Your Questions Answered*, pages 249-255.

If we cannot properly depend on astronomy, the Bible itself provides valuable evidence that we certainly do not want to overlook, and A.D. 31 fits this evidence. For instance, Daniel 9 indicates that the interval between the Messiah's anointing (at His baptism) and the time of His death would be "**half of the week**," or three and a half years. The Gospel of John, by recording the annual Passovers that Jesus attended, provides evidence that three and a half years did indeed elapse between Christ's baptism and His death.

John 2 and 3 tell about a Passover during which Jesus talked at night with Nicodemus and told him that he must be born again.

John 5:1 tells of a feast, most probably a Passover, in connection with which Jesus healed a man who had suffered thirty-eight years from paralysis.

John 6:4 tells of a Passover season during which Jesus fed a very large crowd with a boy's small lunch.

John 12:1 introduces the Passover season during which Jesus died.

We have seen that Christ's baptism occurred near the end of A.D. 27. So His first (or "Nicodemus") Passover occurred in the spring of A.D. 28. Then His second (or "paralytic") Passover fell in the spring of A.D. 29, His third (or "large-meal") Passover came in the spring of A.D. 30—and His final (or "crucifixion") Passover occurred three and a half years after His baptism, that is to say, *in the spring of A.D. 31*, just as Gabriel had indicated.

If Gabriel were an athlete instead of an angel, we would stand to our feet and cheer!

Gabriel's dependability reminds us that according to Daniel 9:24 one of the purposes of the seventy weeks was to "**seal up the vision and prophecy**" (K.J.V.) of the 2300 days. Because the shorter prophecy was so stunningly fulfilled, we have reason to depend on the longer one.

Of course what Jesus *did* during the seventieth week accomplished far more than chronology ever could to seal the vision and prophecy. We'll speak about what He did and its bearing on the 2300 days in the following two sections.

### III. Jesus Kept His Promise

When I was a teenager, I went through periods of reading and memorizing the Bible. I was working in the Psalms once when something exceptional struck me. I went to see my father in his study at bedtime and showed him Psalm 15, K.J.V.

Lord, who shall abide in thy tabernacle?  
 Who shall dwell in thy holy hill?  
 He that walketh uprightly,  
 and worketh righteousness,  
 and speaketh the truth in his heart. . . .  
 He that sweareth to his own hurt, and changeth not.

I pointed to the last line, "He that sweareth to his own hurt, and changeth not." "Does it mean that when you promise something, you ought to do it *anyway*?" I asked.

My dad answered simply, "That's the way it looks to me," and I was profoundly impressed.

"He that sweareth to his own hurt, and changeth not."

The New International Version has "Who keeps his oath even when it hurts." The Jerusalem Bible has "Who stands by his pledge at any cost." The Living Bible, Paraphrased reads this way: who "keeps a promise even if it ruins him."

I feel quite certain about something. When by the grace of God you who read these lines are permitted to live in God's "holy hill," you will be pleased to have as neighbors people who in this life had lived like this. People who bought your used

car and met all the payments, even though the engine burned out. People who ordered a hundred cases of whatever line it was you carried and didn't cancel when a competitor offered them a better deal. People who agreed to sponsor your child's early-teen club and didn't resign when the assistant moved away. People who married for better or for worse and never wavered.

If anyone in all history swore to his own hurt and kept his promise anyway, it was Jesus. In Gethsemane, stretched on the ground in agony the night before the cross, He pleaded with God to find an easier way to save the human race. He did not want to be crucified.

Crucifixion was an excessively brutal way to die. Romans reserved crucifixion for traitors and robbers and most of all for slaves. They conducted crucifixions publicly for their deterrent effect. They stripped a convict naked and flogged him till his chest and back were in ribbons. Then they arranged his legs uncomfortably and drove blunt nails through his ankles and wrists\* into a wooden frame."

But far more distressing even than the torture of crucifixion was, for Jesus, His anticipation of separation from the Father. In poignant anguish on the cross He would shout the prayer, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" Matthew 27:46. God would not actually forsake Him (see John 16:32). But in order to serve as our Substitute and Saviour, our Lord Jesus in some mysterious manner had to be caused to experience the dreadful anguish that all unrepentant sinners will share in the judgment. That final penalty of the wicked when they realize that, by their own choice, they are God-forsaken and lost forever.

In order to save us, Jesus identified Himself with us. He who "knew no sin" was "*made . . . to be sin*" for our sakes! 2 Corinthians 5:21. Sin separates us from God. Isaiah 59:2. As the responsibility of our sinfulness was laid on Jesus in Gethsemane, He sensed Himself being separated like a sinner from His Father. This estrangement, this ugly alienation, was to Him utterly heartrending and abhorrent. Himself our Intercessor, He longed for an intercessor of His own.

Jesus also became oppressed with apprehension that—with the union between Himself and God broken up—He would be unable to bear with patience and compassion the appalling insults and agonies of the trial and crucifixion. To be our Atonement and Sin Bearer, He must remain absolutely free from any sin of His own. If He surrendered in any way to the insinuating temptations of Satan, He knew that the human race, which He loved with all His heart, would be lost forever.

No wonder Jesus prayed in Gethsemane, "My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me." Matthew 26:39.

But lying prostrate in the garden, clutching the weeds with His hands, wrestling feverishly with God as blood forced its way through His skin and mingled with the cold sweat of fear that was forming on His forehead (Luke 22:44), Jesus

\*If, as most Christians believe, Christ's palms rather than His wrists were pierced by nails, the Romans first tied ropes around His wrists to help support His weight. The small bones in the palms could not otherwise have supported Him.

realized that the human race would be lost unless He agreed to die.

His prayer now breathed only submission. "Not as I will, but as thou wilt."

He would keep His promise. He would die for humanity, though even His best friends didn't care enough to stay awake with Him on a night like this. Matthew 26:40-46. He would die for the Jews, even though their corrupt leaders would demand His death.

Jesus was a promise-keeping Saviour, a "covenant-keeping" God.

Daniel 9:27 foretold that He would behave this way. It says that the Messiah would **"make a strong covenant with many for one week."** R.S.V.

*Definition of terms.* We need to define our terms. **"To make a strong covenant"** is an unusual phrase in English. It is an attempt to translate a very unusual expression in Gabriel's Hebrew.

In every instance when the Old Testament tells about someone's merely "making a covenant" (or "ratifying one"—the meaning is the same), the Hebrew idiom employed is "cutting a covenant."<sup>\*</sup> But the phrase "to make a strong covenant" is translated from quite a different set of words.

Now, Jesus most certainly did make or ratify a covenant while He lived on the earth. At the Last Supper He lifted a cup of wine and said to His disciples, "This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins." Matthew 26:28. His use of the word "covenant" and of the phrase "for many" shows that at the Last Supper He was thinking of Daniel 9:27, **"He will make a strong covenant with many for one week."** The reference to His blood means that the covenant could become effective only as He sacrificed Himself on the cross.<sup>†</sup> "Without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sins." Hebrews 9:22.

The covenant which Jesus ratified at the Last Supper was, of course, the glorious "new covenant" (Ezekiel 36:25-28; Jeremiah 31:31-34; Hebrews 8:10, 11) which we discussed on pages 164, 165. It offers (1) forgiveness of every sin, (2) membership among God's chosen people, and (3) power from God to live a changed life in harmony with His laws of love.

Jesus without doubt made or ratified this covenant at Calvary, but Daniel 9:27 does not say merely that He would "make a covenant." Professor Edward Young has correctly observed:<sup>9</sup>

The writer [of the book of Daniel] does not mean to say that he will make a covenant. The ordinary idiom to express such a thought is "to cut a covenant," and

<sup>\*</sup>The idiom seems to be based on an ancient custom of cutting up several sacrificial animals and placing their parts on different altars. The parties making the covenant then walked between the altars (see Genesis 15). The significance seems to have been, "If either of us breaks this covenant, may he be cut apart like these animals."

<sup>†</sup>When a wealthy person promises to mention a friend in his "last will and testament," the friend feels sure he can count on inheriting something, but only after the wealthy person dies. Galatians 3:15-18 and Hebrews 9:15-17 compare the new covenant to a last will and testament. The new covenant was dependable from the moment God first gave it, because God cannot lie (Hebrews 6:18) and because Jesus was determined to die for us at any cost to Himself. But such is the nature of sin that God *could* not ever have provided forgiveness without the death of Jesus. The effectiveness of the new covenant required Christ's death.

this idiom is not used here. Now, if the writer had wished to state that a covenant would be *made*, why did he not employ the ordinary Hebrew idiom for expressing such a thought? Why did he use this strange phrase, "cause to prevail" which appears in only one other passage in the OT, Ps. 12:4 [where it refers to the persuasive power of flattery]?

The R.S.V. translation, "**he will make a strong covenant,**" is one attempt to take the difference into account, but it really misses the point. Gabriel's Hebrew uses a verb based on the Hebrew root, *gabar*, a term that connotes "to prevail," meaning to persist, to predominate, to win, to have real success (see, for example, Genesis 7:18; 49:26; Exodus 17:11; Lamentations 1:16). For Daniel 9:27 Professor Young suggests "cause to prevail," and the Modern Language Bible has almost the same—"make the covenant to prevail."

Perhaps the simplest way to express the meaning is to say that Jesus would energetically *honor His covenant under any circumstances*.

A covenant is a promise. The "new covenant" is the supreme "new promise." Repeatedly in the Old Testament God promised to make or keep this new promise. Thus a dual promise was involved, a promise to keep a promise. And when Jesus, as God's representative, came into the world, He said to His Father, "Lo, I have come to do thy will, O God." Hebrews 10:7.

Having arrived in the world, Jesus the Messiah honored Heaven's solemn pledge in the face of every contrary circumstance. No matter what combination of mockery, threat, torture, dread, and death—of fightings without and fears within—rose up against Him, Christ saw to it that His covenant prevailed. He caused His promise to triumph over all.

Having sworn to His own hurt, He refused to change. He ratified the promise at any cost to Himself, and He then applied it to even the most wicked sinners who sought out its benefits.

*Keeping the covenant for a week.* Daniel 9:27 says that Messiah would keep His promise, come what may, "**for one week.**" The week here is the final one of the seventy weeks allotted in a special sense to the Jews. It was to come "**after**" the sixty-nine weeks. In the "**middle of the week**"\* Jesus was to cause sacrifices to cease—that is, with three and a half years of the final seven left to run, Jesus was to be killed—and then He was going to go on keeping the promise nonetheless. The

\*The R.S.V. translation, "for half of a week," is based unfortunately on the assumption that the prophecy refers merely to Antiochus Epiphanes. In "The Seventy Weeks of Daniel 9: An Exegetical Study" (*Andrews University Seminary Studies* 17 [1979]:13) Professor Jacques Doukhan has pointed out that, although the Hebrew word "*chatsi*" does mean "half" in some other settings, yet when it is used in grammatical construction with a period of time (here a "week"), it always means "middle of," not "half of." See Exodus 12:29; Judges 16:3; and Ruth 3:8, where it means the "middle of the night," or "midnight," and Jeremiah 17:11 and Psalm 102:24, where it means the "middle of one's life," or "mid-life." In Joshua 10:13 "*chatsi*" refers to the middle of the sky. The meaning in Daniel 9:27 is not that Antiochus Epiphanes would suspend Jewish sacrifices for three and a half years—something that Antiochus Epiphanes in fact never did. (According to 1 Maccabees 1:54, 59; 4:52-54, he stopped them for only three years and ten days.) The meaning is that in the middle of the seventieth week Messiah would "abolish," "annul," "terminate" the significance of Jewish sacrifices forever.

prophecy implies His resurrection. It shows that He intended to go on keeping His promise to the Jews even after they crucified Him!

The Bible record shows that He actually did this. A few hours *before* His death an unruly mob shouted angrily, “His blood be on us and on our children.” Matthew 27:25. Six weeks *after* the cross, on the Day of Pentecost, Peter, citing the promise of God, offered forgiveness to these same people and their same children! Said Peter, “Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the *promise*,” Peter concluded, “is to *you* and to *your children* and to all that are far off, every one whom the Lord our God calls to him.” Acts 2:38, 39.

Three thousand Jews accepted the provisions of the promise on that occasion. Acts 2:41. A little later five thousand men, in addition to women and children, accepted Jesus when Peter told them, “*You* are the sons of the prophets and of the *covenant* which God gave to your fathers. . . . God, *having raised up* his servant [Jesus Christ], *sent him to you first*, to *bless you* in turning every one of you from your wickedness.” Acts 3:25, 26.

So persuasive was this superlative sort of love, so attractive was the appeal of a God who kept His promise in spite of rejection and crucifixion, that “the word of God increased; and the number of disciples multiplied greatly in Jerusalem, and a great many of the *priests* were obedient to the faith.” Acts 6:7.

The priests had led the people in their opposition. But Christ’s determination to forgive and save was so intense and undaunted that He caused His covenant to prevail even in *their* wayward and cruel hearts.

Thus in the years immediately following the cross, thousands of Jews accepted the threefold benefits of the new covenant: (1) forgiveness of every sin, (2) power to live changed lives, and (3) membership in God’s special people.

*The new covenant and your family.* “The promise is to you and to your children,” Peter said on the Day of Pentecost. Acts 2:39.

We all hope some day to “abide in God’s tabernacle,” to “dwell on His holy hill” (Psalm 15); but we know that we are completely unworthy. We do not always speak the truth or work righteousness or keep our word. We don’t treat people—even the members of our families—with consistent kindness. Sometimes we are terribly mean.

The new covenant is for us. Let us believe that it is for us, and let us trust it and allow it to go to work inside us.

Alone or at family worship, let us talk about the sacrifice and patience of Jesus until we *know* that He cares deeply about each one of us. As the realization of His love takes hold, we can but bow our heads and say, “Lord, we know You care; we know You love. O Lord, forgive us; forgive our children. In Your wonderful, mysterious way keep Your promise to fill us with Your power to help us keep Your commandments and to be kind and dependable and good like You are. Accept us, please, into Your chosen people.”

He will certainly answer our prayer. He really keeps His promises.

#### IV. God's New Israel

*The temple desolated.* In our discussion on pages 19-22 we reminded ourselves that in the early days of their history, God selected the Israelites to be His special people whose chief responsibility was to reveal to the other people of the world His generous kindness. Gabriel's words in Daniel 9:24, "**Seventy weeks of years are decreed [amputated or cut off] concerning your people,**" imply that God, foreseeing all human activity, knew sadly, in advance, that at the close of the seventy weeks He would have to depend on a different people.

Addressing a large crowd in the temple courts on the Tuesday afternoon before He died, Jesus indicated that the time for this change of people had drawn very close. With deep pathos choking His voice, He declared to the Jews, "Your house is left unto you desolate."

Desolate!

"**Desolate**" is one of the key words in Daniel 9:24-27. Jesus knew that in A.D. 70, some forty years in the future, the Roman general Titus, son of the Roman emperor Vespasian, would violently storm the walls of Jerusalem. Titus's soldiers\*—the "**people of the prince who is to come**" (Daniel 9:26)—would set the temple on fire. The idol-worshiping Roman soldiers—the "desolating sacrilege spoken of by the prophet Daniel" (Matthew 24:15)—would ruin the entire city and leave it uninhabited and desolate. But on this Sunday afternoon at the climax of the triumphal entry, nearly forty years before the Roman armies destroyed the city, Jesus announced to the Jewish people that their temple was already desolate!

A temple is a symbol of God's presence. Either God is, in some deep spiritual sense, present in a temple, or it is only an empty shell:

When Jesus said that the temple was desolate, His words did not make it so. He had left heaven in order to bring to the temple the unparalleled privilege of His physical presence. Suppose the high priest had recognized Him as the Son of God. Suppose he had accepted Him instead of accusing Him—had crowned Him instead of crucifying Him!

Suppose, on behalf of the Jewish people, the high priest had knelt before Jesus and prayed like Daniel, "We have sinned! O Lord, hear! O Lord, forgive."

Alas, John 1:11, K.J.V., says of Christ, "He came unto his own, and his own received him not." The New English Bible says, "He entered his own realm, and his own would not receive him." The R.S.V. reads, "He came to his own home, and his own people received him not."

\*The Jewish historian, Josephus, who was present at the siege of Jerusalem, insists that after holding a council with his generals, Titus determined to save the temple as a priceless ornament of the Roman Empire. Josephus's account, which has not gone unchallenged by modern historians, says in part that in spite of Titus's decision, during the excitement of the attack "one of the soldiers, awaiting no orders and with no horror of so dread a deed, . . . snatched a brand . . . and, hoisted up by one of his comrades, flung the fiery missile through a low golden door. . . . As the flame shot up, a cry, as poignant as the tragedy, arose from the Jews, who flocked to the rescue, lost to all thought of self-preservation, . . . now that the object of all their past vigilance was vanishing."—*Jewish War*, 6.236-253; translation by H. St. J. Thackeray in Loeb Classical Library.



The temple was desolate because Jesus Christ, the Son of God and the Son of man, had come to His temple and had been "rejected by the elders and chief priests and scribes." Luke 9:22.

*The King and His kingdom.* But can we be certain that this is what Jesus had in mind? During His triumphal entry into Jerusalem only two days before He announced that the temple was desolate, had not the Jews regaled Him with thunderous cheers, "Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the Lord"? Luke 19:38.

True enough. But on Friday morning, a few days later, many from the same crowd would shout, "Crucify him!"

The explanation is that the Jews really wanted Jesus to be their king—but they wanted Him to be their kind of king. They wanted Him to lead them in overthrowing the Romans and in making Jerusalem, not Rome, the capital of the world. They did not want a king who could say to Pilate, on the night of His trial, "My kingship is not of this world." John 18:36.

In His public and private presentations Jesus very often referred to the "kingdom of God" and to the "kingdom of heaven" (see, for example, Matthew 3:2; 6:33; Mark 10:14). Subjugated by the Romans, the Jews listened eagerly. Their pulses quickened as they dreamed of their glorious days as a nation under Kings David and Solomon. They recalled the so-called "kingdom prophecies"\* which predicted world leadership for the Jewish people. They interpreted these prophecies in a materialistic sense and longed for a leader who could guarantee international prestige and economic prosperity. They wanted a Saviour from Rome but not necessarily from their sins.

But when a wealthy young leader asked how he could be sure to gain eternal life, Jesus didn't reply, Help Me reestablish the Israelite kingdom. He told him instead to keep the commandments, give away his possessions, and "follow me." Matthew 19:16-22.

When Nicodemus came at night, Jesus said that if he wanted to enter the kingdom, he must first be "born again." John 3:1-5, K.J.V.

Most people don't want to "follow Christ" or be "born again"! The wealthy young leader walked away, sorrowful. Even Nicodemus surrendered fully only when Jesus died on the cross.

Many Jews claimed the kingdom promises without caring about the kingdom qualifications. They forgot that in Daniel 7 God promised the kingdom only to the "saints." They forgot Psalm 15:1-4, K.J.V.:

Lord, who shall abide in thy tabernacle?  
Who shall dwell in thy holy hill?  
He that walketh uprightly,

\*Some "kingdom prophecies" are found in 2 Samuel 7:8-16; Isaiah 2:2-4; 4:3-6; Jeremiah 23:5-8; Zechariah 12:14. The conditional nature of even 2 Samuel 7:8-16 is revealed in 1 Kings 2:3, 4 and Psalm 132:10-12. The promised "son of David" king was, of course, Jesus Christ. In rejecting the promised King, the people of Israel forfeited their promised world leadership.

and worketh righteousness,  
and speaketh the truth in his heart. . . .  
He that sweareth to his own hurt, and changeth not.

Many Jews in Jesus' day forgot that to many of the kingdom prophecies there was a conditional aspect. "If at any time I declare concerning a nation or a kingdom that I will build and plant it," says the Lord through Jeremiah 18:9, 10, "if it does evil in my sight, not listening to my voice, then I will repent of the good which I had intended to do to it."

Many Jews forgot that under the new covenant God offers power for the changed life that qualifies a person for membership among His special people. Chafing under Roman oppression, these Jews wanted power to conquer their enemies. They were not interested when Christ offered them power to conquer themselves.

Even today millions of Christians would rather rule others than control themselves. Like the Jews of old, they too want Christ to be their own kind of king.

*The vineyard reassigned.* The very morning after the triumphal entry Jesus stood in the temple and in story form warned the Jews that because they had refused to let God help them live *His* kind of life, the "kingdom" was about to be given to someone else.

In His story Jesus told of a businessman who planted a vineyard at a distance from his home and rented it to tenant farmers. "When the season of fruit drew near," Jesus said, "he sent his servants to the tenants, to get his fruit; and the tenants took his servants and beat one, killed another, and stoned another. Again he sent other servants, more than the first; and they did the same to them.

"Afterward," Jesus went on, "he sent his son to them saying, 'They will respect my son.'

"But when the tenants saw the son," Jesus continued, "they said to themselves, 'This is the heir; come, let us kill him and have his inheritance.' And they took him and cast him out of the vineyard, and killed him.

"When therefore the owner of the vineyard comes," Jesus asked His audience, "what will he do to those tenants?"

The crowd was caught up in the story and felt a swell of righteous indignation. They replied heatedly, "He will put those wretches to a miserable death, and let out the vineyard to other tenants who will give him the fruits in their seasons."

Immediately Jesus came to the point. Explaining that the "son" in the story was Himself, whom the priests were about to murder, He said to the Jews, "Therefore I tell you, the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a nation producing the fruits of it." Matthew 21:33-43. The new nation, as we shall see in a moment, was to be the fellowship of true Christians drawn out of all races.

*The end of the seventy weeks.* For the termination of the seventy weeks, Gabriel in Daniel 9:24-27 prescribed no specific event. Gabriel did not say what

particular act or transaction, if any, marked the close of the prophetic period which, for 490 years, had counted out the privileges of the Jewish nation.

We do know, however, that a few years after the cross—and various commentators<sup>10</sup> have placed the event around A.D. 34—the Jewish leadership confirmed its rebellion against God by creating the first Christian martyr. The Sanhedrin, the highest governing body in the Jewish commonwealth, officially stoned Stephen.

In killing Christ the Jewish leaders had persuaded the Romans to commit the murder for them. In killing Stephen they threw rocks with their own hands, employing the traditional Jewish procedure for execution. The symbolism was devastating.

Ever since Christ's baptism/anointing in A.D. 27, God had caused the covenant with Israel to triumph in the public ministry of Jesus—a unique demonstration of patient, forgiving love. Now the vineyard was to be taken from Israel and offered to a different "nation."

But just as God didn't *make* the temple desolate, so now He didn't arbitrarily deprive the Jewish nation of its privileges in order to bestow them on the Gentiles. The antichristian Jewish leaders launched a "great persecution" against the Christian Jews, which compelled them to leave Jerusalem. Acts 8:1, 2.

Harassed by this persecution, the Jerusalem Christians "went everywhere preaching the word." Acts 8:4, K.J.V. Philip preached Christ in Samaria. Acts 8:5. Peter, divinely guided, opened the gospel to the Roman military officer, Cornelius, in Caesarea. Acts 10. Most amazing, one of the leading Jewish persecutors, Saul of Tarsus (later known as Paul the Apostle), became convinced of God's goodness by watching the forgiving spirit of his own victims. Born again through the grace of God, Paul heard the voice of God summon him to "carry my name before the Gentiles and kings and the sons of Israel." Acts 9:15. "Depart," said the heavenly voice, "for I will send you far away to the Gentiles." Acts 22:21.

Thus the rejection of Christ which was epitomized in the stoning of Stephen led directly to the proclamation of the gospel in the non-Jewish world.

*God's "Israel" today.* Very soon Gentile Christian congregations sprang into existence all the way from Jerusalem to Rome. Some of their names are preserved in the titles of New Testament books: Romans, Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, Thessalonians.

Contemplating these new congregations, Paul perceived the fulfillment of the prophecy of Hosea 2:23, "Those who were not my people I will call 'my people.'" Romans 9:25.

In Paul's day every Jew still cherished God's promise found in Exodus 19:5, 6. It constituted a kind of national charter: "If you will obey my voice and keep my covenant, you shall be my own possession among all peoples; . . . and you shall be to me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation." But in 1 Peter 2:9, God told the new Christian membership that *they* were now the "chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's own people."

The vineyard had been assigned to its new tenants.

But the new tenants were not exclusively Gentile! The founders of the new nation, Christ and His apostles, were all Jews, and its members were a mixture of Gentiles and Jews. Let us never forget this.

Said Paul to the Gentiles in Ephesians 2:12-14, "You [Gentiles] were at that time [before the cross] separated from Christ, alienated from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. But now in Christ you who once were far off have been brought near in the blood of Christ. For he is our peace, who has made *us both* [Jews and Gentiles] *one*, and has broken down the dividing wall of hostility."

In Christ, "Gentile" needs no longer to be distinguished from "Jew." "In Christ Jesus you are all sons of God, through faith. . . . There is neither Jew nor Greek, . . . for you are *all one* in Christ Jesus. And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to promise." Galatians 3:26-29.

The covenant promises apply equally to all. Everyone is urged to receive (1) forgiveness of every sin, (2) power to be changed, and (3) membership in God's chosen people. *All the "saints of the Most High"* (Daniel 7:18) are assured entry into His everlasting kingdom.

The success of the gospel among non-Jews led some Christians in Paul's day to wonder if perhaps the kingdom would never again be restored to the Jews. God had promised the kingdom to King David's dynasty in perpetuity. 2 Samuel 7:8-16. Had God now failed? they asked.

They need not have worried. God can be trusted! For one thing, Jesus, the supreme "son of David" (Matthew 22:42), was already sitting on the throne of the universe (Revelation 3:21)! For another, they needed to *define the term "Jew."*

"He is not a real Jew who is one outwardly," Paul explained in Romans 2:28, 29. "He is a Jew who is one inwardly." Being a real Jew is not a matter of inheriting genes from Father Abraham! "It is not the children of the flesh who are the children of God," Paul said in Romans 9:8, "but the children of the promise are reckoned as [Abraham's] descendents." In God's sight "there is no distinction between Jew and Greek. . . . For 'every one who calls upon the name of the Lord will be saved.'" Romans 10:12, 13.

God's kingdom promises cannot fail! Indeed, in Christ their value is enhanced. The Old Testament prophets could not hope that more than a "remnant" (a small minority) of literal Israel would ever accept the covenant and be saved into God's kingdom. Romans 9:27; 11:14. But as the gospel reaches the Gentiles as well as the Jews, as God's new "Israel" becomes every true believer in every part of the whole wide world, Paul can reach the triumphant conclusion, "And so *all Israel* will be saved"! Romans 11:26.

**"The kingdom and the dominion and the greatness of the kingdoms under the whole heaven shall be given to the . . . saints of the Most High"—including you and your spouse and your parents and your children, and anyone else who accepts the promises of the new covenant—and "their kingdom shall be an everlasting kingdom."** Daniel 7:27.

### V. The Judgment Has Begun

For the moment he must have been the happiest man on earth.  
But only for the moment.

He was an important servant of a wealthy lord. In telling about him in Matthew 18:23-35 Jesus indicated that this servant had borrowed ten thousand talents—a very large sum—and that he had been unable to pay it back. Perhaps he had invested it in a shipload of ceramics from Italy and the ship had gone down, or in a caravan of eastern silks, and bandits had made off with the lot.

Anyway, when the lord had found out that the servant couldn't pay, he had ordered him and his family sold as slaves and their value applied to his account.

Horried, the servant had fallen on his knees. "Lord, have patience with me," he begged, "and I will pay you everything."

"Out of pity for him," Jesus says, "the lord of that servant released him and forgave him the debt." It was most generous of him.

At that particular moment the servant must have felt happy indeed. But as he walked out of his lord's office, he met a fellow employee who happened to owe him a "hundred denarii" (worth perhaps twenty dollars, more or less). Incredibly he grabbed his petty debtor by the throat and yelled at him to pay up.

The employee wrenched himself loose and fell to his knees. "Have patience with me," he begged, "and I will pay you."

*If the 10,000-talent debtor had wanted to stay forgiven, he should have forgiven his 100-penny debtor.*



But the servant, angered at having to wait for his money, had the man thrown in prison.

When the other employees heard what had happened, they complained to the lord—who immediately called his servant in and talked to him with considerable feeling. “You wicked servant!” he said. “I forgave you all that debt because you besought me; and should you not have had mercy on your fellow servant, as I had mercy on you?” And he had *him* thrown in prison.

Jesus concluded His story with this sensible but sobering message: “So also my heavenly Father will do to every one of you, if you do not forgive your brother from your heart.” Matthew 18:35.

Let’s keep this story in mind as we continue our study of Daniel 8 and 9. We will return to it specifically on page 237. It has a very direct bearing on the prophecy of the 2300 days.

*The 2300 days dated.* Fascinating and significant as the seventy weeks are when they are studied alone, we must remind ourselves again that they are mentioned by Gabriel as a means of focusing light on the 2300 days of Daniel 8:14.

**“For two thousand and three hundred evenings and mornings [that is, for 2300 days\*],”** said the angel in Daniel 8:14, **“then the sanctuary shall be restored to its rightful state.”**

**“Make this man understand the vision,”** came the command to Gabriel a moment later, and Gabriel immediately attempted to comply. But after he had explained the beasts and horns that were also part of the vision, he had to stop, for Daniel fainted, and the 2300 days went unexplained.

About thirteen years later Gabriel returned to Daniel and invited him to **“understand the vision.”** Right off he talked about time. **“Seventy weeks of years,”** he began, **“are decreed [amputated or cut off] concerning your people.”** Daniel 9:24.

We have seen that the exact fulfillment of Gabriel’s seventy-week prophecy in the first advent of Christ contributes to an understanding of the 2300 days partly by proving that the 2300 days represent *2300 years*. For example, it would be impossible to amputate 490 years from 2300 ordinary days!

We have been guided to this conclusion about *2300 years*, by recognizing these points also:

1. The 2300 days are introduced in the *symbolic* part of Daniel 8, revealing that they are as certainly symbolic as are the beasts, horns, 1260 days, and
2. Ezekiel, Daniel’s contemporary prophet, fellow exile, and neighbor in Babylonia, was specifically informed in a symbolic prophecy that a day stands for a year. Ezekiel 4:6.

We might also have considered that in the earliest years of the Jewish nation, while the Israelites were still on their way from Egypt to Palestine, God through Moses related forty *days* of disobedience to forty *years* of punishment. Numbers 14:34. In this way God established the “day for a year” concept in the Jewish mentality from the start.

\*See pages 173, 174.

The Jewish scholar Nahawendi wrote about the "2300 years" in the ninth century A.D.<sup>11</sup> Arnold of Villanova, a brilliant physician who treated popes and kings and who battled Paris theologians, argued in 1292 that when Daniel "says 'two thousand three hundred days' it must be said that by days he understands years." "It is not unaccustomed, in the Scripture of God," Villanova went on, "for days to understand years. . . . The Spirit in Ezekiel testified: 'A day for a year I have reckoned to you.'"<sup>12</sup>

Daniel 8:17 says that the vision of the 2300 days applied to "*the time of the end.*"

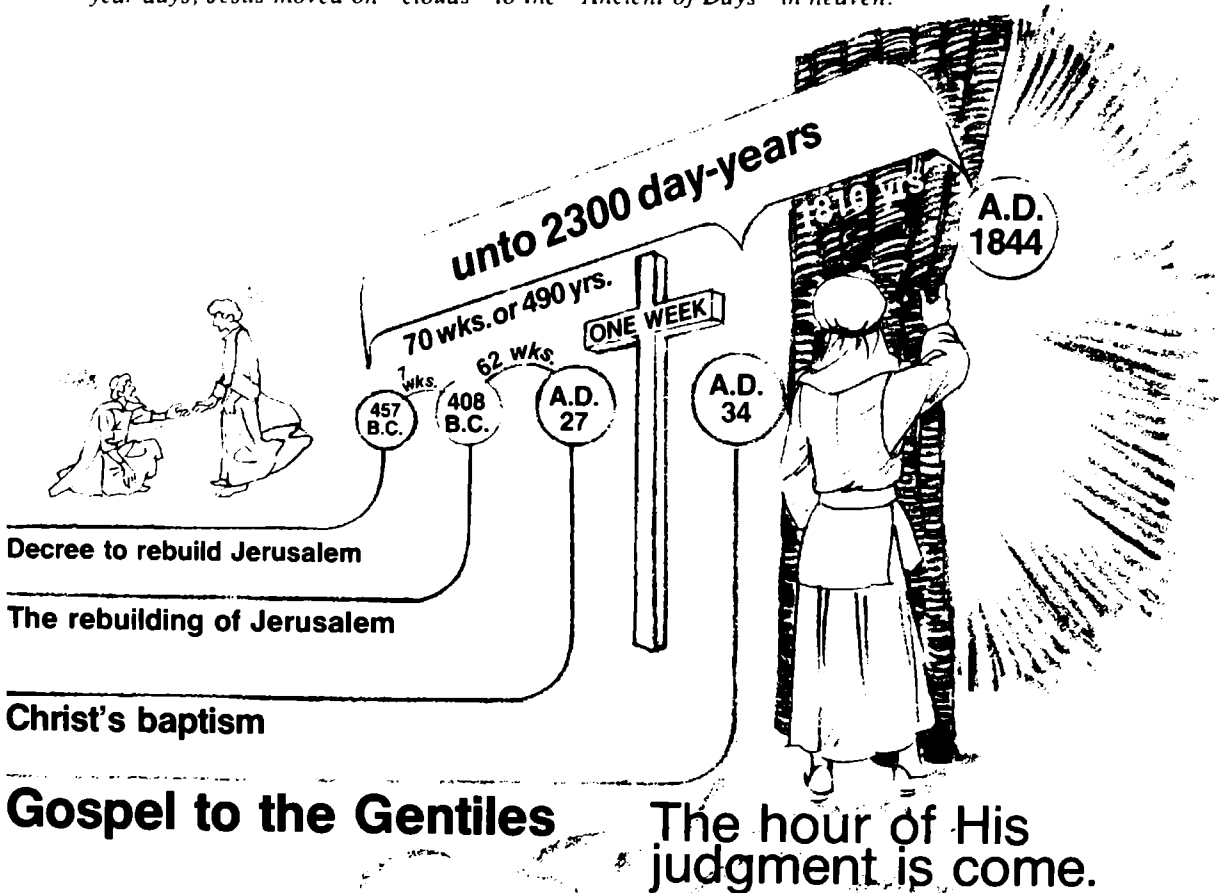
Assured from Scripture that the 2300 days are 2300 years, we still want to understand when they were to begin so that we can calculate when they were to end. The clue, again, must lie in the prophecy of the seventy weeks. How else could the seventy weeks help us adequately to "**understand**" the 2300 days? Therefore Gabriel's pronouncement "**From the going forth of the word to restore and build Jerusalem to the coming of an anointed one, a prince**" *dates the beginning of the 2300 days as surely as it dates the beginning of the seventy weeks.*

We have found that the seventy weeks began in 457 B.C. Thus it follows that the 2300 days also began in 457 B.C.

So, when did they end?

The 490 years ended in A.D. 34. When we cut off or amputate 490 years from

*At the commencement of the Day of Atonement/Day of Judgment, at the close of the 2300 year-days, Jesus moved on "clouds" to the "Ancient of Days" in heaven.*



2300 years, 1810 years are left. So, the 2300 years were to extend 1810 years after A.D. 34. Thus the 2300 days ended in the year 1844.

The 2300 year-days ran from 457 B.C. to A.D. 1844.

*What happened in 1844?* You are curious and wonder what happened in 1844. You do not remember reading anything appropriate in a history book.

The angel said, in effect, that in 1844 the "sanctuary" would be restored to its rightful state. As we have seen, the sanctuary he was talking about is that "sanctuary . . . which is set up not by man but by the Lord," the one that is located in heaven where Jesus ministers as our faithful High Priest. Hebrews 8:1, 2.

The process which marked the close of the 2300 days began *in heaven* in 1844. This is why you have not read about it in history books!\*

On pages 175-181 we saw that the words "**then shall the sanctuary be restored to its rightful state,**" when studied carefully in their context and in light of the underlying Hebrew, connote at least four related processes and events:

1. The exoneration of Christ's *tamid*, His high-priestly ministry, after a long period when it was "trampled under foot."
2. The final cleansing of the sanctuary, and of the people who worship at the sanctuary, from all sin.
3. In connection with this cleansing, an act of judgment.
4. Following this cleansing and act of judgment, a sounding of the jubilee trumpet, the destruction of nations by the supernatural stone, and the inheritance of Christ's kingdom by His saints.

*Exoneration of Christ's tamid.* The high-priestly ministry of Jesus was obscured in the Middle Ages by ministers who neglected to preach the gospel and who imposed confession and penance on people, threatening with excommunication or even execution all who wouldn't comply (see pages 166-172). The unveiling of the truth about Christ's heavenly priesthood began around 1517 when Martin Luther rediscovered the biblical teaching that salvation is a *gift* of God which we may enjoy through *faith* in Jesus. "By grace you have been saved through faith; and this is not your own doing, it is the gift of God—not because of works, lest any man should boast." Ephesians 2:8, 9. "The wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord." Romans 6:23.

A further vast enrichment in the understanding of Christ's heavenly ministry occurred during the period around 1844. You are reading some of it now! Much more will be discussed in our comments on the book of Revelation.

All Christians believe in the Christ of history, hanging on the cross. Many Christians believe in the Christ of the future, coming on the clouds. But a great many Christians do not know much about our contemporary Christ, performing a very special work which commenced in 1844. Everyone should learn what the Bible says about the work that Jesus is doing for all of us at the present time.

*The sanctuary and the Day of Judgment.* On pages 109-112 we saw that Daniel

\*On page 226 we observed that Gabriel also specified no on-earth event for the close of either the seven weeks or the seventy weeks.



7:9-14 pictures the initial phase of the final judgment. The special work that Jesus is doing for us at the present time involves His participation in this early phase of the judgment in addition to His normal services as our High Priest.

In the vision of Daniel 7 the Ancient of Days takes a seat and **“one like a son of man”** approaches Him on the **“clouds of heaven.”** The Ancient of Days is God the Father and the Son of man is Jesus, but in Daniel 7:13 Christ’s coming **“with the clouds of heaven”** is not what Christians refer to as the second coming. At the second coming Jesus comes “in the clouds” (1 Thessalonians 4:17) to the earth to rescue His saints. In Daniel 7 He appears before the Ancient of Days to make up His roster of saints before coming to rescue them.

This traveling of Jesus from one place to another at judgment time is not unique. He journeyed from heaven to earth when the time came in the seventy-week prophecy for Him to be born and slain as our Redeemer. He will again journey from heaven to earth when the time comes for Him to reign in glory as our King of kings. Likewise, in 1844, at the close of the 2300 year-days, He is portrayed as passing from one part of heaven to another when the time came for Him to make a significant transition in His service as our High Priest.

In symbolic, sanctuary language we may say that in 1844 Jesus passed from the holy place of heaven’s sanctuary to its most holy place\* (see pages 175, 176).

On page 180 we saw that the judgment in Daniel 7 is the same event as the cleansing/restoring of the sanctuary in Daniel 8:14. This cleansing/restoring/judging *precedes the second coming*. In Revelation 14:6, 7 John says, “I saw another angel fly in midheaven, with an eternal *gospel* to proclaim to those who dwell on the earth . . . ; and he said with a loud voice, . . . *The hour of his judgment has come.*” Inasmuch as the gospel is being preached after the hour of judgment has arrived, the judgment must commence before the work of the gospel closes. It begins before the second coming.

Indeed! The gospel has seen its *widest* application to human need since the commencement of the judgment in 1844.†

*Five phases of final judgment.* To avoid confusion we ought to notice that the Bible refers to the final judgment in a variety of ways. Sometimes it seems to speak of a single divine act. “God will bring every deed into judgment, with every secret thing.” Ecclesiastes 12:14. God “has fixed a day on which he will judge the world.” Acts 17:31. “We shall all stand before the judgment seat of God.” Romans 14:10.

\*Hebrews 6:19 R.S.V. and Hebrews 9:8 K.J.V. sound as though Jesus were already at work in heaven’s most holy place during the first century, when the book of Hebrews was written. The underlying Greek for Hebrews 6:19, however, says only that Jesus had entered “within the veil,” as in the K.J.V. and N.A.S.B. There were two veils or curtains (Hebrews 9:3), and Hebrews 6:19—as also for Hebrews 8:2, 9:12, 24, 25; 10:19; and 13:11—tells us simply about the “holy places” or “sanctuary.” The book of Hebrews is concerned to tell us that Jesus is at work in the heavenly sanctuary, but it is not concerned to say in which area of the sanctuary He is working.

†In his famous *History of Christianity*, page 1345, Kenneth Scott Latourette selects the nineteenth century as the “great century” for the gospel. Christianity closed the century, he observes, “on a rising tide and with mounting momentum, more widely spread geographically than at any previous time, . . . and . . . making its impression upon more of mankind than ever before.”

But in addition to referring to the final judgment in general terms like these, the Bible also designates at least five phases of the final judgment, one before, one at, and three after the second coming:

1. *Judgment before the second coming*: The Son of man comes to the Ancient of Days (Daniel 7:9-15, 26, 27), cleanses the sanctuary (Daniel 8:14), and *investigates* the books (Daniel 7:10) to disclose who is qualified to be retained in the book of life.

2. *Judgment at the second coming*: The Son of man, seated in glory, *separates* the sheep from the goats. Matthew 25:31-46.

3. *Judgments after the second coming*:

a. During the 1000 years the saints sit on thrones, and judgment is committed to them as they *examine* the records of the world and of the fallen angels. Revelation 20:4; 1 Corinthians 6:2, 3.

b. At the close of the 1000 years the unsaved are *sentenced* to their final punishment. Revelation 20:12.

c. After the sentencing, judgment is *executed*, and the unsaved and death itself are thrown into the lake of fire. Revelation 20:13-15.

Although the terms are not used in the Bible, for convenience we can speak of phases of the final judgment that deal with "investigation," "separation," "examination," "sentencing," and "execution." The phase which began in 1844 is the "investigative judgment," or, more simply perhaps, the "pre-advent\* judgment."

The Bible also mentions other moments of judgment besides the final judgment. King Belshazzar was "weighed in the balances and found wanting" on October 12, 539 B.C. (see pages 82-84). Israel was judged at the close of the seventy weeks, when her unique privilege as God's most favored nation was assigned to a new Israel, which was to be composed of "real Jews" of all races (Galatians 3:28, 29), the spiritual descendants of Abraham.

*Day of Judgment/Day of Atonement*. On page 178 we saw that the symbolic cleansing of the Old Testament sanctuary (Leviticus 16 and 23) occurred on the symbolic Day of Atonement, which was also a symbolic Day of Judgment. By reasoning in the reverse direction, we learn that the current day of judgment (since 1844) is also a Day of Atonement.

This is a precious insight.

God's principle purpose in this first phase of the final judgment is not to condemn but to acquit. In "cleansing the sanctuary" God seeks to remove sin so thoroughly that even the record of confessed sin is blotted out. Sin separates. Isaiah 59:2. Removal of sin makes reconciliation (at-one-ment) a reality. Removal of the last memory of sin ("I will remember their sin no more," Jeremiah 31:34) renders reconciliation absolute and permanent.

\*"Advent" means "coming." Christ's first advent was His coming to earth as a baby. His second advent will be His second coming on the clouds. "Pre-advent" is here used to mean "prior to the second coming."

God is searching the “books,” not to expose the people who have failed, but to disclose those who have remained faithful. The fearful judgment at the end of the 1000 years concludes with those who are unsaved being condemned to the punishment of eternal death. But the pre-advent judgment that began in 1844—the great final Day of Atonement that fulfills the symbolic Day of Atonement of Leviticus 16—evidently culminates with the thrilling pronouncement: “Clean from all your sins before the Lord.” Leviticus 16:30, K.J.V. At its close Jesus departs from heaven to earth to gather His saints and to crown them with eternal life.

A further parallel with the Old Testament now appears meaningful. The only persons whose lives came in review on the old Day of Atonement were the Israelites, God’s special people. This was so because the only sins that were blotted out on that day were the sins of the people who had offered sacrifices during the preceding year. The godless tribes beyond the bounds of Israel were presumed lost without examination, at least from the human standpoint.

So today, God seeks His faithful among the “real Jews” who have joined His true Israel through the centuries. Jesus Christ is the “true light that enlightens every man.” John 1:9. The people who are being examined in the present investigative, pre-advent phase of the judgment are those who, in some way or other, at some time or other, have responded favorably to this Light. “There is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.” Acts 4:12.

*Atonement includes more than the cross.* Perhaps you are accustomed to thinking of the “atonement” as including only the cross and not the pre-advent judgment as well.

The cross was indeed supreme, a unique act of atonement made on our behalf. Our gracious, loving, eternal, holy God suffered the horrible punishment of a traitor, robber, and slave. As our Substitute He shed His blood for us. We bow our heads and our hearts. Uncomprehending, we ask, “O God, do You care this much for us?”

And He replies, “Yes, I care this much—and more.”

We learned on page 163 that in order for the *shed* blood of a sacrifice to accomplish atonement it had to be *applied* to an altar in the sanctuary by a priest. And before atonement could be ultimate and final, blood had to be applied again by a priest, in the most holy place.\*

It may come as a surprise to discover that the older versions of the Bible, such as the K.J.V., never used the English word “atonement” to refer to Christ’s death. They used it almost exclusively in connection with sanctuary activities that *follow* the slaying of a sacrifice.

The atonement involves even more than the cross!

\*Sin does not need to be forgiven twice (see Hebrews 10). The second application of blood, made on the Day of Atonement, represented the removal of the record of confessed sin and also the fact that the repentant sinner had *chosen to remain in a faith relationship with God and still desired to be at-one with Him.*

Jesus, our Sacrifice, died for us once; but think how long He has *suffered* for us. In all the afflictions of ancient Israel, He was afflicted. Isaiah 63:9. He is pained when a sparrow falls. Matthew 10:29. For thousands of years "he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows." Isaiah 53:4.

Jesus died for us, but He was *raised* for our justification. Romans 4:25. And He "always lives to make intercession" for us. Hebrews 7:25.

It is good to remember at all times that Jesus is still eager to "cause the covenant to prevail" in our lives at any personal cost.

"Atonement" is God's entire program for meeting our needs and for reconciling us to Himself. The cross and the post-1844 cleansing/judgment, each very different and each essential, are two major, unique events in the grand drama of the plan of salvation (see pages 163, 164).

*Faithful to the end.* Are you accustomed to thinking that you are already "clean from all your sins before the Lord" in view of God's promise in 1 John 1:9?

In truth, when we confess our sins, we *are* forgiven—just as the Old Testament Jew was forgiven as soon as his animal's blood was applied to an altar. Leviticus 4:35. In 1 John 1:9 God assures us that "if we confess our sins, he is faithful and just, and will forgive our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

But God is not arbitrary. If, say, a teen-age girl accepts Jesus as her Saviour during a gospel revival but later chooses not to live as a Christian, God will not

*"If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just, and will forgive our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness." 1 John 1:9.*



*compel* her to live with Him forever. How uncomfortable that would be for both of them!

It is unthinkable, besides, that God will save all the people who merely think well of Him for an hour once a week in church but who refuse to live like Christians during the rest of the week. What sort of neighbors would they make in the new kingdom?

"He who endures to the end will be saved," says Jesus in Matthew 24:13. Hebrews 3:14 cautions us that "we share in Christ, if only we hold our first confidence firm to the end." Paul warns the Gentile "branches" that have been grafted into the "olive tree" of God's true Israel that they may yet be broken off. "If God did not spare the natural branches [i.e., Jews by nationality], neither will he spare you," he says. God will continue to be kind to you, "provided you continue in his kindness." Romans 11:20-22.

*In order to be pronounced clean in the end, we must continue to the end to "abide" in Him (see John 15:1-11).*

When we recognize our sinfulness and come to God "Just as we are," we are (1) immediately forgiven and (2) accepted into Heaven's family, God's true Israel. The new covenant promises this. There is no waiting in line and no price to pay.

But the new covenant also promises (3) power to help us to change—to obey His commandments and to develop kindly ways and an upright character. "I will put my law within them, and I will write it upon their hearts." Jeremiah 31:33. God really wants us to qualify in the judgment.

One of the primary functions of the ongoing pre-advent judgment is to disclose the people who have accepted God's proffered power *as well as* His promised pardon.

*Forgivable, forgiven, forgiving.* God cannot overlook selfishness. He cares too much for our happiness to populate His beautiful new earth with stubborn sinners.

Take only one of His judgment criteria as an example: In His Sermon on the Mount, at the close of the Lord's prayer, Jesus laid down this principle, "If you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father also will forgive you; but if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses." Matthew 6:14, 15.

If this rule is placed alongside the promise of 1 John 1:9, the picture emerges that God forgives us freely as soon as we say we're sorry for our sins against Him; but if we aren't sorry enough to forgive the people who sin against us, then after a while His forgiveness of us doesn't count anymore. In other words, in order to stay forgiven we must be both forgivable and forgiving.

But it's hard to forgive people who have been unfair to us!

Indeed it is. But the only people we *can* forgive are people who have been unfair to us. No one else has done anything to be forgiven for.

Here is a practical application for the new covenant. God promises to write His law of love in our hearts. He wants to help us to be forgiving. He actually promises

to give us His spirit of love. It is ours for the asking and for the believing. For the *looking* too. By beholding we become changed. 2 Corinthians 3:18. If in imagination we look at Christ dying for our sins and living again for our salvation, it becomes easier for us to forgive the people who hurt us. We find ourselves saying with Jesus, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do." Luke 23:34.

In Christ's story with which we began this section, the forgiven but unforgiving servant needed to feel God's love in his heart.

I doubt very much that this man's problem was ingratitude. I assume that he was very thankful for being forgiven ten thousand talents. But he completely misinterpreted what his lord had done. He assumed, evidently, that he was forgiven because he was such an important servant that his lord couldn't very well get along without him. I believe he swaggered out of the office.

And when he met the poor chap who couldn't instantly hand over his twenty dollars, he got very angry—because the man's refusal seemed like an insult to his dignity.

He was grateful that the lord had forgiven him. He ought to have been grateful that his lord had forgiven *even* him.

And who is this unforgiving servant? You and I, I fear, unless we see ourselves unworthy of even the least of His favors, so humbled by His goodness and our sinfulness that we want to be as nice to everybody as He has been to us.

How can we Christians sing "Amazing Grace" in church and then fight with our spouses in divorce courts to see who gets the camera and who gets the TV? Jesus Christ died and lives again to make atonement—to provide forgiveness and reconciliation. How, then, can Christians demand apologies, harbor grudges, and sue each other? How can we do these things and hope to be declared, in the end, "clean from all your sins before the Lord"?

May God help us!

And that is just what God wants to do; He wants to help us now, during this end-of-time Day of Atonement. The Day of Judgment/Day of Atonement is in session at this present moment! Under the new covenant those who in the end will be (1) clean from all their sins before the Lord, and who will be (2) privileged to live among God's people in a sinless world, will be those who (3) have not only confessed their sins but have also accepted His power to live helpfully and healingly in this sinful world.

*Grace to forgive an enemy.* Corrie ten Boom, who suffered terribly in a concentration camp because she helped Jews during World War II and who has become well known through her book and movie *The Hiding Place*, testifies that the Lord does provide grace to help us be forgiving.

"It was at a church service in Munich," she says, "that I saw him, the former S.S. man who had stood guard at the shower room door in the processing center at Ravensbruck. He was the first of our actual jailers that I had seen since that time. And suddenly it was all there—the roomful of mocking men, the heaps of clothing, Betsie's pain-blanching face.

"He came up to me as the church was emptying, beaming and bowing. 'How grateful I am for your message, *Fräulein*,' he said. 'To think that, as you say, He has washed my sins away!'

"His hand was thrust out to shake mine. And I, who had preached so often to the people in Bloemendaal the need to forgive, kept my hand at my side.

"Even as the angry, vengeful thoughts boiled through me, I saw the sin of them. Jesus Christ had died for this man; was I going to ask for more? Lord Jesus, I prayed, forgive me and help me to forgive him.

"I tried to smile. I struggled to raise my hand. I could not. I felt nothing, not the slightest spark of warmth or charity. And so again I breathed a silent prayer. Jesus, I cannot forgive him. Give me Your forgiveness.

"As I took his hand the most incredible thing happened. From my shoulder along my arm and through my hand a current seemed to pass from me to him, while into my heart sprang a love for this stranger that almost overwhelmed me.

"And so I discovered that it is not on our forgiveness any more than on our goodness that the world's healing hinges, but on His. When He tells us to love our enemies, He gives, along with the command, the love itself."<sup>13</sup>

## VI. The Vision Understood and Sealed

God instructed Gabriel to make Daniel understand the vision of the 2300 days. After our extensive study of Daniel 9:13, 14 and Daniel 9:24-27, we too are able to understand, at least in part. A summary will crystallize our discoveries thus far. First, Daniel 9:24-27, N.A.S.B.:

**24. Seventy weeks** [ $70 \times 7 = 490$  years]

**have been decreed** [cut off from the 2300 year-days]

**for your people** [the Jews, who continued to be God's chosen nation until A.D. 34]

**and your holy city** [Jerusalem, where Christ was to die, and the New Jerusalem with its heavenly sanctuary, where, within the seventy weeks, Jesus would "anoint the most holy place"]

**to finish transgression, to make an end of sin, to make atonement for iniquity, to bring in everlasting righteousness** [all provided for at the cross and made effective through Christ's heavenly priesthood]

**to seal up vision and prophecy** [to guarantee fulfillment of the 2300 day prophecy (a) by fulfilling time elements so accurately that we can depend also on the date 1844 and (b) by providing at the cross the essential basis for Christ's heavenly ministry, which culminates in the pre-advent (pre-second-coming) Day of Atonement/Day of Judgment],

**and to anoint the most holy place** [to dedicate the heavenly sanctuary].

**25. So you are to know and discern that from the issuing of a decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem** [from the decree of Artaxerxes in 457 B.C. which restored Jerusalem to capital-city status and necessitated its reconstruction]

**until Messiah the Prince** [Jesus, at His baptism/anointing]

**there will be seven weeks and sixty-two weeks** [69 weeks = 483 years, from the decree of 457 B.C. to Christ's baptism in A.D. 27],

**it [Jerusalem]**

**shall be built again, with plaza and moat, even in times of distress** [*adjacent nations opposed Israel's resettlement in Palestine*].

**26. Then after the sixty-two weeks** [*that is, at some point after His baptism in A.D. 27*]

**the Messiah will be cut off and have nothing** [*Jesus was crucified virtually alone and without even His clothes*]

**and the people of the prince who is to come** [*Rome, represented by at least Titus and his soldiers, who fought Jerusalem in the first Jewish War, A.D. 66-73*]

**will destroy the city and the sanctuary.** [*The soldiers of Titus burned Herod's temple and demolished Jerusalem.*]

**And its end will come with a flood, even to the end there will be war; desolations are determined.** [*In the Jewish War, 66-73, half a million Jews are said to have died, almost depopulating Palestine.*]

**27. And he** [*Jesus, the Messiah Prince*]

**will make a firm covenant with many for one week** [*Jesus "caused His covenant to prevail" with many of the Jews for the entire seventieth week, A.D. 27-34, even though Jewish leaders executed Him*],

**but in the middle of the week** [*Passover, A.D. 31*]

**he will put a stop to sacrifice and grain offerings** [*by His supreme Sacrifice, He abolished the significance of the temple sacrifices*],

**and on the wing of abomination will come one who makes desolate** [*here is Christ's prediction of the Roman "desolating sacrilege"\**]

**even until a complete destruction, one that is decreed, is poured out on the one who makes desolate** [*Daniel 7:11 foretold complete destruction of both pagan and Christian Rome*].

With these insights freshly reviewed, we're ready for Daniel 8:13, 14.

**13. "For how long is the vision** [*that is, the vision that Gabriel was told to make Daniel understand*]

**concerning the continual burnt offering** [*Christ's continual tamid ministry as our High Priest in the heavenly sanctuary*],

**the transgression that makes desolate** [*the sinners who have opposed God's truth and people, especially pagan and Christian Rome, the "desolating sacrilege" which Jesus spoke about*]

**and the giving of the sanctuary and host to be trampled under foot** [*the obscuring of Christ's high-priestly ministry, portrayed as extending in a notable sense until 1844*]?"

**14. And he said to him, "For two thousand and three hundred evenings and mornings** [*2300 years*]

\*The little horn of Daniel 8 represents Rome in two phases: (1) the pagan Roman Empire and (2) the Christian Roman Church (see pages 153-155). Necessarily the "transgression that makes desolate" (Daniel 8:13) also has a two-phase fulfillment: (1) the military attack by pagan Roman soldiers on Jerusalem in A.D. 70, leaving the temple totally destroyed, and (2) the long-continued spiritual teachings of Christian Rome, deflecting worshipers away from Christ's priesthood in the heavenly sanctuary to its own substitute priesthood. The phrase "the transgression that makes desolate" is paralleled by "upon the wing of abominations shall come one who makes desolate" (Daniel 9:27), "the abomination that makes desolate" (Daniel 11:31; 12:11), and "the desolating sacrilege" (Matthew 24:15). "Transgression," "abomination," or "sacrilege" is, in this case, an erroneous system of worship (see, e.g., 1 Kings 11:5-7; 2 Kings 23:13).



**then** [in 1844, which was 2300 years after 457 B.C. when the seventy weeks began]  
**the sanctuary** [in heaven, where Christ ministers]  
**shall be restored to its rightful state** [cleansed and vindicated in the pre-advent Day of Atonement/Day of Judgment].”

The chart on page 242 shows the parallel nature of Daniel’s prophecies and provides a convenient review.

*The judgment is now.* The Bible has many more things to say about the Day of Atonement/Day of Judgment that is transpiring in heaven and about the current role Jesus is playing in our salvation. We’ll have occasion to refer to them often in our expositions of Revelation in *God Cares, II*.

God cares. It was important to Him to tell us in advance when Jesus would fulfill the atonement on the cross (A.D. 31) and when He would commence the pre-advent Day of Atonement/Day of Judgment in heaven (1844). He wanted us to know, because these events are vital to the plan of salvation.

It is wonderful to know that soon the books will have been investigated and God will declare to the universe that His roster of saints has been made up, containing all the people who have been found clean from all their sins before the Lord. Leviticus 16:30.

Yet it is a solemn thought that the judgment has been in progress more than a century. It is in session now.

How important that we “afflict ourselves” as the Israelites did on the old Day of Atonement (Leviticus 23:27)—that is, that we “examine ourselves” to see whether we are holding on to the faith (2 Corinthians 13:5), and with earnest prayer and Bible study seek to know God’s will for us and obey it.

“Fear [that is, reverence] God, and keep His commandments,” says Ecclesiastes 12:13, 14, “for God will bring every deed into judgment, with every secret thing.”

God longs to write His commandments, His law of love, on our hearts. Have we let Him? Are our thoughts victorious over immorality? Are our business practices above dishonesty? Are our social relations free from hypocrisy? Are we kind to our children? Do we honor our parents? Do we worship God sincerely and keep His Sabbath holy? Do we really help people who are in need? Do we forgive as we have been forgiven?

Do we love the Lord? Are we abiding in Him (John 15:1-11)? Or do we think more about TV entertainers than about our Lord and Saviour?

“I know the plans I have for you, says the Lord, plans for welfare and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope. Then you will call upon me and come and pray to me, and I will hear you. You will seek me and find me; when you seek me with all your heart.” Jeremiah 29:11, 12.

### **Further Interesting Reading**

*In Bible Readings for the Home:*

The chapter entitled “The Hour of God’s Judgment.”

# PARALLELS IN DANIEL'S VISIONS-2

DANIEL 2	DANIEL 7	DANIEL 8	DANIEL 9
BABYLON <i>gold head</i>	BABYLON <i>lion</i>		
PERSIA* <i>silver chest</i>	PERSIA* <i>bear: one shoulder higher</i>	PERSIA* <i>ram: one horn higher</i>	★ DECREE, 457 B.C., to restore Jerusalem
GREECE** <i>brass thighs</i>	GREECE** <i>leopard: with four heads</i>	GREECE** <i>goat: one horn becomes four</i>	70 WEEKS (457 B.C.-A.D. 34)
ROMAN EMPIRE <i>iron legs</i>	ROMAN EMPIRE <i>monster</i>	ROMAN EMPIRE <i>little horn from the west</i>	★ baptism/anointing, A.D. 27 crucifixion, A.D. 31 new "Israel," A.D. 34
EUROPE AS DIVIDED ROME <i>iron and clay feet and toes</i>	EUROPE AS DIVIDED ROME <i>ten horns on monster</i> A.D. 538		DESOLATING SACRILEGE <i>the destroyer prince destroys temple and Jerusalem A.D. 70</i>
extension of Roman iron from legs into feet symbolizes continuation in Europe of characteristic Roman concepts	ROMAN CHURCH <i>little horn on monster</i>  <i>persecutes saints speaks vs. God</i>	ROMAN CHURCH <i>little horn</i>  <i>tramples host and heavenly <u>tamid</u></i>	DESOLATING SACRILEGE <i>the destroyer prince</i>  <i>desolates saints and sanctuary</i>
★ 1260 DAYS (538-1798)	★ 1798	★ 1844	
NEW KINGDOM <i>stone becomes a mountain</i>	JUDGMENT SITS <i>Son of Man comes to Ancient of Days</i>	SANCTUARY "RESTORED" <i>Day of Atonement pre-advent Day of Judgment</i>	DESOLATING SACRILEGE <i>destroyed completely</i>

\*For the early years after Cyrus conquered Babylon, "Persia" may be considered an abbreviation for "Medo-Persian Empire."

\*\*"Greece" is an abbreviation for Alexander's "Greco-Macedonian Empire" and for the group of "Hellenistic," or "Macedonian," kingdoms that developed out of it. Says, M. Cary, *A History of the Greek World*, p. 10:

"Alexander conquered for Greece rather than for Macedon. Hellenistic history is therefore essentially an extension of Greek history, . . ."

# Your Questions Answered

**1. A number of Bible students start the seventy weeks in 444 B.C. rather than in 457 B.C. as advocated on pages 190, 202. Are there good reasons for preferring one date above another?**

The dates 457 B.C. and 444 B.C.\* represent two separate authorizations for the restoration of Jerusalem issued by the Persian emperor Artaxerxes (465-423 B.C.). The first authorization, which was very broad in scope, was issued in the seventh year of his reign, 457 B.C. The second, a relatively limited one, was issued in his twentieth year, 444 B.C. (see Ezra 7 and Nehemiah 2).

It will aid us materially in settling on the better of these two dates if we realize to begin with that Artaxerxes was in some respects a fickle man. For example, when a quick-witted friend saved him once from an attack by an angry lion, he "rewarded" his friend by banishing him!<sup>14</sup> On another occasion his representative and brother-in-law, Megabyzus, solemnly assured an Egyptian rebel named Inarus that if Inarus surrendered, his life would be spared. But a few years later, Artaxerxes executed Inarus anyway.<sup>15</sup>

Persian decrees were supposed to be irreversible (see Daniel 6:8 and Esther 8:8). The changeableness and unpredictability of Artaxerxes I keenly embarrassed Megabyzus and led him and many of his fellow Persians into an open revolt against Artaxerxes that came near to wrecking the empire.

The fact that Artaxerxes had to issue a *second* authorization for the restoration of Jerusalem, when, under Persian law, one alone should have been enough, was a consequence both of his fickleness and of the rebellion of Megabyzus. Further, it is important to our study to know that Megabyzus, at the time of his large-scale rebellion, was serving as governor of Beyond the River—the province that included Syria and Palestine and in which Jerusalem was located.

Now, the books of Ezra and Nehemiah reveal that the Jews experienced a great deal of trouble in the course of rebuilding their temple and of restoring Jerusalem. Ezra 4:4-6, 24 tells about various difficulties the Jews encountered during the reigns of Cyrus (539-530 B.C.), Darius (522-486), and Ahasuerus (486-465). Ezra 4:7-23 reports, somewhat out of order, how next a group of Samaritans complained to Artaxerxes (465-423) about the rebuilding of Jerusalem and how, in response, fickle Artaxerxes reversed his decree of 457 B.C. and ordered that the rebuilding be suspended.

This complaint of the Samaritans was addressed directly to King Artaxerxes by local officials, and the king's reply was, in turn, addressed directly to the local officials (see Ezra 4:7, 8, 17). Both the local officials and the king in this

\*Bible commentators have sometimes dated these two authorizations in 458 and 445 respectively. The discovery of dated papyri from a Jewish garrison town on the island of Elephantine in the river Nile, and especially of a double-dated papyrus known as "Kraeling 6," has established the accuracy of 457 and 444 (see Horn and Wood, *The Chronology of Ezra 7*).

instance avoided the ordinary custom of communicating with each other through the governor of the province. But their procedure in this case is not hard to understand if the governor, Megabyzus, was in open revolt against the king at the time!

Let us project a survey of the period onto our mental screens.

In 538 or 537 Cyrus issued a decree for rebuilding the temple and for resettlement of Jews in Palestine. Ezra 1.

Around 520 a governor of Beyond the River named Tattenai (whose name has been found on a cuneiform tablet) investigated progress at the temple, which had been going on by then for some sixteen years, and wrote to Darius asking him to check the archives to see if the Jews had indeed received authority from Cyrus to rebuild the temple. Ezra 3:3-17.

Around 519 Darius graciously issued a new decree, confirming the earlier one of Cyrus. Ezra 4:1-12. No mention was made by Cyrus, Darius, or Tattenai of rebuilding the city itself; only of rebuilding the temple.

In 457 Artaxerxes I issued the third decree, this one authorizing the restoration of Jerusalem to capital-city status. That is, he authorized the appointment of magistrates and judges and the application of Jewish and Persian law to local government. Ezra 7:12-26. His decree implied, of course, the construction of buildings to house the government officials and their offices and courts and also the construction of city walls to protect the new officials, offices, and courts, and the construction of forts to house and headquarter the soldiers who would be needed to enforce the decisions of the magistrates and the verdicts of the judges. Without such buildings, walls, and forts, the appointment of magistrates and judges would have been meaningless.

Ezra traveled to Palestine at once and led the people into the long, long work of restoring the ancient city. Ezra 7:1-10.

It was apparently about a decade later, perhaps around 448 B.C., that Megabyzus, as governor of Beyond the River, sprang the very serious revolt that we referred to earlier. The Samaritans took advantage of the new situation to make Artaxerxes believe that the Jews were fortifying their city so that they, too, could rebel. In the touchy context of the times, *the changeable Artaxerxes replied directly to the Samaritans that they should see to it that the Jews stopped their rebuilding efforts at once*. Ezra 4:7-23. The Samaritans were only too happy to oblige the king, and in their zeal went beyond his orders. They did not merely stop the work; *they broke down some of the walls and burned the wooden city gates and temple doors*.

Meanwhile, back at Susa, one of the capital cities of the Persian Empire (and Daniel's apparent location during the vision of Daniel 8 more than a century earlier), Nehemiah was as worried as any other Jew. Nehemiah was the king's "cupbearer." Nehemiah 1:11. He was certainly aware of the serious revolt in Palestine. He probably also knew about the king's order requiring the rebuilding of the city to be stopped. He feared the worst.

Nehemiah had a brother (apparently a blood brother, according to Nehemiah 7:2) who was living in Palestine. If only Hanani would come back to Persia, Nehemiah could find out from him what was really going on there.

Then one day, Hanani, Nehemiah's brother, did appear in Susa. Nehemiah eagerly questioned him about conditions in Jerusalem. What Hanani told him filled him with dismay.

Said Hanani, "The survivors there in the province who escaped exile are in great trouble and shame; the wall of Jerusalem is broken down, and its gates are destroyed by fire." Nehemiah 1:3.

"When I heard these words," says Nehemiah, "I sat down and wept, and mourned for days." Nehemiah 1:4.

Nehemiah was so taken back and disheartened by the news that his brother had brought him that he couldn't throw off his gloom for some three or four months (compare Nehemiah 1:1 with 2:1). King Artaxerxes was away at the time on business in other parts of the empire. When at last he returned, Nehemiah, the king's cupbearer, still could not compose himself sufficiently to appear happy in his presence.

Artaxerxes, providentially in a good mood, asked him what his trouble was. When Nehemiah explained, the king at once issued a series of valuable executive memos and told Nehemiah to take them west with him to the new governor of Beyond the River, Sanballat by name, and personally to supervise the repair of the walls of Jerusalem at state expense.

Some commentators have supposed that Nehemiah was plunged into despair at news from his brother Hanani that virtually the entire city, except for the recently rebuilt temple, was still lying on the ground as it had been left by Nebuchadnezzar in 586 B.C. 142 years earlier. This is hard to believe. As a boy and as a young man Nehemiah had known all about the destruction under Nebuchadnezzar. News from his brother in 444 B.C. stating that "the walls of Jerusalem were broken down" could scarcely have surprised Nehemiah *unless he had known about a substantial rebuilding of the city and its walls in the meantime.*

Those Bible students who say that it was not until 444 that the rebuilding of the walls of Jerusalem was first authorized, overlook or do not know about many of the data that we have discussed here. The decree of 457, which authorized the restoration of Jerusalem to capital-city status, with the inescapable restoration of the defensive and enforcing mechanisms essential to supporting such a status, qualifies as the starting point for the 490 years much better than 444 does.

**2. How is it that 490 years from 457 B.C. extend to A.D. 34 rather than to A.D. 33?** If your pocket calculator says that the 490 years from 457 B.C. extend to A.D. 33 instead of to A.D. 34, there are two reasons.

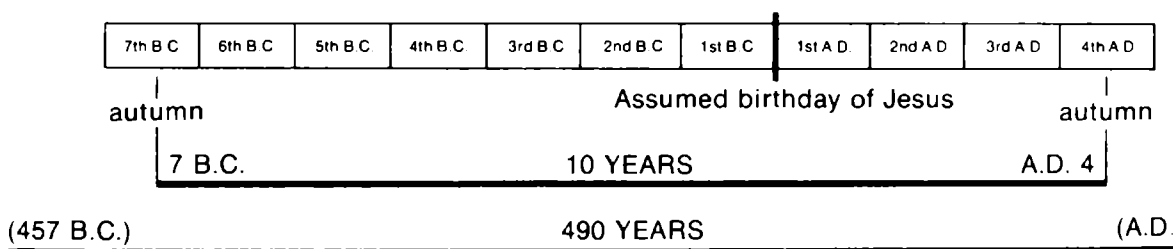
1. Your calculator doesn't know that the 490 years began in the autumn of 457 B.C. and so have to extend to at least the autumn 490 years later.

2. Your calculator is programmed to deal with *cardinal* numbers (like "one," "two," "three," etc.) and not with *ordinal* numbers (like "first," "second," "third," etc.). The years B.C. and A.D. are *ordinal* numbers. They help us to locate events that took place within the "first" year, "second" year, "third" year, etc., before or after the birth of Christ.

In school we are taught to add and subtract cardinal numbers almost exclusively, because our contemporary culture uses cardinal numbers almost exclusively. In ancient times greater use was made of ordinal numbers.

Now, between the cardinal numbers +1 and -1 there is a zero. Pocket calculators are programmed—and children in school are taught—to assume this zero. But between "the first year after" the birth of Jesus and "the first year before" the birth of Jesus, there was no twelve-month-long zero year. Between the first year before you were born and the first year after you were born there was no such zero year either!

This chart will help you calculate ten years from B.C. 7 to A.D. 4. Analogous calculations will take you successfully from B.C. 457 to A.D. 34.



3. Why is the R.S.V. punctuation for the "seven weeks and sixty-two weeks" different from that in some other versions? Some versions, including the R.S.V. and The New English Bible, make a division between the seven weeks and the sixty-two weeks. The R.S.V. reads as follows: "To the coming of an anointed one, a prince, there shall be seven weeks. Then for sixty-two weeks it shall be built again. . . . And after the sixty-two weeks, an anointed one shall be cut off." The inference is that there are two anointed persons, one of them coming after seven weeks and the other, after an additional sixty-two.

The R.S.V. translation differs sharply from the N.A.S.B. version used in our study of pages 209, 210, which links the seven weeks and the sixty-two weeks together. Versions that agree with the N.A.S.B. include the K.J.V., the American Standard Version, the New International Version, the Jerusalem Bible, the Modern Language Bible, and the version of Monsignor Knox.

It must be remembered that, like the rest of the Old Testament autographs,\* the original manuscript which Daniel prepared contained no punctuation. At some unknown early period, scribes introduced punctuation into the

\*An "autograph" is the original handwritten material. A "manuscript" can be a later handwritten copy, either of the autograph or of another manuscript.

translation known as the Septuagint and the one by Theodotian. The famous Latin Vulgate version made around A.D. 400 also used punctuation. Later, between 600 and 1400, punctuation was introduced into Hebrew manuscripts by Jewish scribes called Masoretes.<sup>16</sup>

The translators of the N.A.S.B., K.J.V., American Standard Version, and so on, chose to follow the early punctuation used by Theodotian, the Septuagint, and the Latin Vulgate. The R.S.V. and The New English Bible translators elected to follow the later Masoretic punctuation.

The punctuation mark that causes the difference is known as an *athnach*. It looks like this: ^ . In many cases it has the force of an English colon or semicolon. Here is a rather literal translation of the pertinent portion of Daniel 9:25 showing the location of the Masoretic *athnach* but omitting all other punctuation:

... to the coming of messiah prince there shall be seven weeks ^ sixty-two weeks it shall be restored and built with squares and moat but in a troubled time.

Now, although the *athnach* often has the force of an English comma or semicolon, it sometimes doesn't have any more value than a comma, and sometimes it seems to have no value at all. Here are three examples<sup>17</sup> from the book of Daniel. In the first the *athnach* seems to be a comma, but in the second and third examples it has little if any value.

Daniel became distinguished above all the other presidents and satraps ^ because an excellent spirit was in him. Daniel 6:3.

These men came by agreement and found Daniel ^ making petition and supplication. Daniel 6:11.

I, Daniel, perceived in the books ^ the number of years. Daniel 9:2.

Inasmuch as the Masoretic punctuation was supplied more than a thousand years after Daniel was written, and inasmuch as the *athnach*, even when present, does not always signify an important pause, we are fully justified in accepting the translations in the N.A.S.B., K.J.V., Jerusalem Bible, and so on, in preference to the translation in the R.S.V.

**4. Where are the chiasms in Daniel 9:24-27?** A "chiasm" (KIE-asm) is a sophisticated literary device in which two pairs of parallel lines are arranged in the order Y Z, Z' Y'. To aid the eye, the lines can be printed in an hourglass or "X" configuration. It is from the Greek letter X, often pronounced "KIE," that the chiasm got its name. To prepare for Daniel 9:24-27, here is a chiasm from another part of Daniel, Daniel 12:10:

Y	Many shall purify themselves, and make themselves white, and be refined;
Z	but the wicked shall do wickedly;

**Z'     and none of the wicked shall understand;**  
**Y'     But those who are wise shall understand.**

The initial two lines of this chiasm speak Y about the pure and Z about the wicked. In the second pair of lines, the order is *reversed*. The wicked Z' are mentioned first, and then Y' the wise. We are not expressly informed that the wise people of the last line are the same as the pure people of the first line, but an English reader guesses at the identification (the wise equal the pure) intuitively. The Hebrew reader in ancient times knew without doubt that the wise were the same as the pure, because he was familiar with the Y Z, Z' Y' sequence of chiasms. As soon as he noticed the *reversal* in the middle lines, he leaped to the correct conclusion.

There is a jewel of a chiasm in the first section of Daniel 9:27. Quoting from the N.A.S.B. we get

**Y    He [Messiah] will make a firm covenant with the many**  
**Z    for one week, but**  
**Z'   in the middle of the week**  
**Y'   He will put a stop to sacrifice and grain offering.**

The Y Y' lines speak of the Messiah's activities, while the Z Z' lines talk about a week and the middle of a week. Again, by the laws of the chiasm, we know there is a definite relationship between the fourth line and the first. In this case we know that the Messiah puts a stop to the sacrifices in connection with His success with the covenant. Through His death as the ultimate Sacrifice, He renders all animal and cereal sacrifices meaningless.

Daniel 9:26, 27 presents a fine, complex chiasm. Simplified a bit it looks like this:

**Y    The Messiah will be cut off with no one to help.**  
**Z    The sanctuary will be terminated [destroyed]**  
**by the desolater prince.**  
**Z'   The sacrifices will be terminated [stopped]**  
**by the Messiah.**  
**Y'   The desolater prince will be destroyed.**

In the Z Z' lines reference is made to the sanctuary and its sacrifices. In the Y Y' lines, the two princes are referred to, and the implication is that the desolater prince will be destroyed because he first of all cut off the Messiah.

Look more closely, and you will find a wordplay. The verb "**destroy**" or a synonym ("cut off," "stop") is found in each line. And references to the princes bounce back and forth—Messiah, desolater, Messiah, desolater—like a ball in a game of tennis.



Analysis of these chiasms helps confirm our confidence in the literary analysis of Daniel 9:24-27, which we undertook on pages 206-211.

**5. Why cannot astronomers date the crucifixion?** Before we look at some of the reasons why astronomers cannot date the crucifixion, we need to know a few things about Passover, and we need to think about the moon.

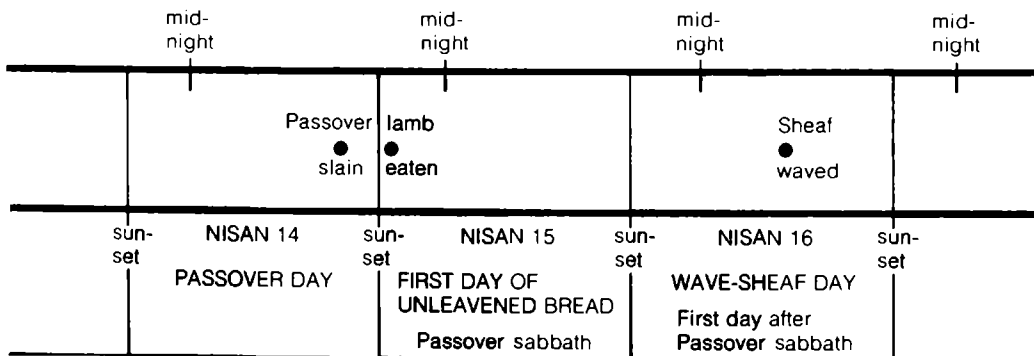
*The observance of Passover.* In Exodus 12 Moses stipulated that Passover lambs should be killed on the fourteenth day of the first month of the Jewish religious year; that is, on Nisan 14, in the spring. Passover commemorated the miraculous deliverance of the Israelites from Egypt at the time of the Exodus. For the celebration in Christ's day, each large family, or group of small families, had a lamb slain at the temple during the afternoon of the fourteenth and then roasted it at home. After dark that night they ate the lamb along with bitter herbs and unleavened bread.

Because Jewish days began at sunset, the afternoon on which the Passover lamb was slain came near the end of Nisan 14; and the evening, when the lamb was eaten, was actually the beginning of Nisan 15.

Moses stipulated in Leviticus 23:6 that no leavened bread should be eaten for a whole week. Thus Nisan 15 was known as the First Day of Unleavened Bread. (In time the whole period from the slaying of the lamb to the last day of Unleavened Bread came to be known loosely as "Passover" and "The Feast of Unleavened Bread.") Whatever day of the week the *First Day of Unleavened Bread* fell on was regarded as a sabbath, the annual Passover sabbath (see Leviticus 23:7 and the *Jewish Encyclopedia*).

On the day following the First Day of Unleavened Bread—that is, on the day following Passover sabbath—Moses said (in Leviticus 23:9-15) that a sheaf of new, ripened grain should be waved before the Lord by a priest in the temple. Waving this sheaf of "first fruits" was a gesture of praise to God for the entire crop. It marked the moment when the barley harvest could begin. Paul used it as a symbol of Christ's resurrection as the "first fruits of those who have fallen asleep." 1 Corinthians 15:20.

A chart will show the relationship among these special days.



*A few observations about the moon.* To twentieth-century urban dwellers, the celebrated orb of night is a pleasant but largely dispensable luxury. If we happen to notice it, surging up from the eastern horizon, orange and strangely oversize at the time of full moon; or if we happen to notice it in the west, a fragile crescent suspended in the ruddy glow of sunset, we may be enchanted for a moment, but that is all.

We don't feel we need the moon. We have electric lights to see by at night; we have printed calendars to tell the date by, and quartz-crystal digital watches to tell the time by.

Go back a couple of centuries, however, and the moon provided virtually all the night light that most people could afford. Go back two thousand years, and most calendars were conscientiously regulated by the appearance of the moon.

The word "month" comes from the word "moon." Originally a month was the twenty-nine or thirty days between the first appearance of a crescent moon at sunset and the first appearance of the next crescent moon.

The twenty-nine or thirty days! Twelve months of twenty-nine or thirty days each equal only about 354 days, which is eleven or twelve days short of the  $365\frac{1}{4}$  days in the solar year. Because of the shortness of the so-called "lunar year," based on the moon alone, it was necessary in ancient times to insert a thirteenth month every second or third year. The result was a lunisolar calendar with some years about 354 days long and others about 383 days long.

Although the process seems awkward to us, the people then were used to it. By at least the fourth century B.C. Babylonian astronomers had developed a "nineteen-year cycle" that showed in advance just when to insert the extra months (seven times in the nineteen years) in order to keep the months more or less in step with the seasons and thus achieve optimum synchronization with the sun. After the Romans forbade the Jews to live in Jerusalem (about A.D. 135), Jewish observations from Jerusalem became impossible, and the Jews developed a cycle similar but not identical to the Babylonian one.

Have you noticed that when the moon is full it rises in the east at almost the very time when the sun sets in the west? Because the full moon is on the *opposite* side of the earth as compared to the sun, it is said to be in "opposition" to the sun.

The converse of a full moon is a "new moon." Whereas a full moon is in opposition to the sun, a new moon, which is located on the *same* side of the earth as the sun, is described as being in "conjunction" with the sun. Many people think that a crescent moon is the same as a new moon, but it isn't. A full moon is all light and a new moon has *no* light (except for a trace of earthshine). Because a new moon is located on the same side of the earth as the sun, the sun's light falls entirely on the side we cannot see and a new moon is to us virtually *invisible*.

But the moon is always restlessly changing its relationship to the sun and to

the earth. So it comes about that in several hours after new moon—or within a day, or two days, or even up to nearly four days (see page 253)—the moon so shifts its position in the sky that we are able to see a slender crescent of it hanging once again above the western horizon soon after sunset.

Among the Jews, Passover was timed to occur at or near a full moon at the beginning of the barley harvest; that is, soon after the spring equinox. It is known from the Gospels that Jesus died on a Passover (Nisan 14) that fell on a *Friday* in the early years of the procuratorship of Pontius Pilate. Astronomers are assumed to have unlimited capacity to calculate the motions of the heavenly bodies. To some Bible students,<sup>18</sup> therefore, it appears a simple matter to ask astronomers to give us the dates for the first full moon after the spring equinox in the years 29-33 and then to conclude that whichever full moon falls on a Friday must be the Passover of the crucifixion.

Of course, astronomers *can* readily supply all the new moons we need, and, for that matter, all the full moons we may desire as well. Indeed, subtle and complicated though the necessary calculations are, in 1973 Herman H. Goldstine taught an IBM 360 Model 91 computer to figure out all the new moons and all the full moons between 1001 B.C. and A.D. 1651! And the computer calculated them—all 65,600 of them—in only 132 seconds.<sup>19</sup>

But how valuable are these staggering calculations for our purposes? They do help a little; but the problem is that we have to take into account several other vital factors, each of which, unfortunately, is imponderable and unknowable in the present state of astronomy and archaeology.

a. **The law of the barley harvest.** If the priests were required to wave a sheaf of fresh-cut barley (the first grain to ripen in Palestine) in the temple the day after Passover sabbath as a signal for the barley harvest to commence, the weather had to have been warm enough for a few weeks prior to Passover in order for the barley to be ripe.

The climate in Jerusalem can be bone-chilling cold as late as the end of March. I know this from experience. Because the twelve-month lunar year was so short compared to the 365¼ day solar year, Passover was frequently in danger of coming too early for the barley. Thus a thirteenth month often had to be inserted in March in order to lengthen the old year and to postpone the Passover and the day of Wave Sheaf. With this extra month inserted, Passover might come close to the *second* full moon after the equinox rather than to the first one. At our great distance from the time of Christ, no astronomer or archaeologist knows which years contained this thirteenth month.

b. **The Babylonian or the barley-harvest cycle?** We mentioned a moment ago that the Babylonians had a nineteen-year cycle under which the thirteen-month years were all arranged in advance. Archaeologists have learned what this cycle was and how to relate it to the Julian-Gregorian calendar that we use today. If we knew for certain that the Jews in Jerusalem followed the Babylonian cycle in the time of Jesus, we could easily transfer the Babylonian data to

Jerusalem and know without doubt which years contained the extra month. But we do not know that Jerusalem Jews were following the Babylonian cycle at the time, and there is evidence that they were not.<sup>20</sup> The Babylonian cycle would have placed Passover in some years a *month too early* for the barley harvest.

*The Interpreter's Bible*, in its comment on Matthew 26:17, is commendably cautious when it says that A.D. 30 may be considered the date of the crucifixion "if" the Palestinian Jews were, at the time, following the Babylonian cycle—which, quite evidently, they were not. On the contrary, A.D. 31 is as possible as A.D. 30 if atmospheric and astronomical conditions combined to place Nisan 1 that year at a maximum interval after the new moon.

c. **Visibility of the crescent.** According to ancient custom, before a crescent moon could be counted as marking the commencement of a month, it had actually to be seen and reported to a committee of priests. Official observers stood on vantage points at sunset on the 29th of a month and scanned the western sky eagerly. The earliest crescent often cannot be seen until the sun has set long enough for the dusk to be somewhat advanced, and often it is so close to the horizon by then that it drops out of sight after being visible to a trained eye for only a few minutes.

If there were a low-lying cloud, if merely a denser-than-average haze polluted the horizon at Jerusalem, the anticipated crescent would not be observed. The current month would be continued an additional day, making it thirty days long. And the new month would commence on the following night, even if the crescent were still obscured. (Remember that Jewish days and, hence, Jewish months and years, began at sunset.)

Nisan 14 commenced at sunset on the fourteenth night, counted "inclusively," after the official announcement of the crescent.

Even if modern astronomers were able to tell us the precise evenings when the new spring crescents were most likely to have been seen at Jerusalem in A.D. 30 to 33, they still could not tell us for sure that they were actually seen on those nights, because they have no way of knowing what atmospheric conditions prevailed there at the time. Consequently, even if they could give us the true nights when the crescent moon should have been seen, they still could not tell us whether that night was actually counted as Nisan 1 or as the 30th of the preceding month. And this weakness is crucial, because in order to locate the Friday of the crucifixion, which was a Nisan 14, the 1st of Nisan must of course be known precisely.

We are looking for a Passover—that is, for a Nisan 14—that occurred on a Friday sometime in the years 30 to 33; and we are expecting, from the "midst of the week" prediction, to find it in A.D. 31. The point we are making is that it is impossible to prove from astronomy which of these years actually had a Nisan 14 Friday.

Was Friday, April 7, A.D. 30, the Passover Day of Christ's crucifixion, as

many commentators have assumed? It may have been, *if* the crescent appeared after sunset on Friday, March 24, fourteen nights earlier. But if the crescent was obscured on March 24 and the month had to begin a day late, then Nisan 14, Passover Day, did not come on Friday, April 7 but on Saturday, April 8—and the year A.D. 30 is disqualified. Or, perhaps in this particular year the weather was cold, the barley was slow, and Nisan was required to commence on the night of the new crescent a month later; then Nisan 14 fell on a Sunday or Monday, and, once more, A.D. 30 is disqualified.

d. **The interval between new moon and the crescent.** We mentioned on page 251 that the interval between new moon and the crescent can be as short as a few hours or as long as almost four days. Here is one of the most perplexing of problems. Some commentators who presume to tell us the exact Friday on which the crucifixion fell assume that the crescent always appeared either on the same day as new moon or on the following day. They think they can tell the evening of the first crescent just by glancing at Goldstine's list of new moons. They do not realize the *variability* of the interval between new moon (conjunction) and the visible crescent.

Achilles Tatianus in the sixth century A.D. observed that the crescent moon appears up to "three or four days after [the] birth [of the moon] . . . and not at the same time she was born."<sup>21</sup>

Joannes Hevelius in the seventeenth century warned that "the first rising of the moon does not generally happen on the first day after conjunction, but at length on the second, often also on the third and fourth."<sup>22</sup>

And an ancient astronomer named Geminus has been quoted as saying "that when the moon is in *perigee*, and her motion quickest, she does not *usually* appear until the second day, nor in *apogee*, when slowest, until the fourth. The exception in the former case intimating that she might sometimes be seen on the first day."<sup>23</sup>

Fully in harmony with these statements, there is reason to believe that in the year A.D. 30 the crescent may not have appeared on March 24 (see above), even if the weather had been fine, for the interval between the new moon of March 22 and its subsequent crescent may well have been longer than two days; and, if so, Nisan 14 would not have occurred on a Friday. But a Nisan that starts as late as March 25 is still quite early for the barley harvest; so it is likely that it started twenty-nine or thirty days later, in April, making a Friday Nisan in A.D. 30 quite impossible.

e. **Sectarian differences.** A fifth matter for concern in dating the crucifixion by the moon is evidence in the Gospels that in the time of Jesus the Jews themselves, even in Jerusalem, were not agreed on how to calculate the Passover! The priests may even have used calculations partly independent of the moon!

Although on the week Christ died the official slaying of Passover lambs took place on Friday afternoon and the feast on Friday night, Jesus and His disciples

prepared their Passover lamb on Thursday afternoon and ate it on Thursday night. And the account in the Gospels leaves the impression that what Jesus and the disciples did many other people were doing, for it appears to have occasioned no surprise.

There is, moreover, evidence from the Dead Sea Scrolls<sup>24</sup> that the Essene community taught that Passover should always be celebrated on a Wednesday, without regard either to the moon or to Nisan 14!

It is possible, therefore, that Passover was observed in Palestine on *Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday* in the year when Jesus died! If the Jews could not agree on how to calculate Passover in terms of the moon, truly we do not have any positive way of determining the date of Christ's death by asking astronomers to pick out a Friday, Nisan 14.

Professional astronomers warn us that they are indeed incompetent to date the crucifixion. For example, D. H. Sadler, superintendent of the *Nautical Almanac* office in the Royal Greenwich Observatory in England, states that "purely local conditions can invalidate even the most careful work in respect of a particular observation of the lunar crescent."<sup>25</sup>

Nonastronomers are properly impressed by the ability of astronomers to predict eclipses. But in contrast to the reliability of eclipse calculations, Professor O. Neugebauer, expert on ancient astronomy at Brown University, says that "exactly the opposite, however, is the case in the problem of first visibility [of the crescent moon]. All modern tables have to make arbitrary assumptions as to the visibility conditions in antiquity in general or in specific localities. These assumptions are highly arbitrary, and even for modern times, extremely unreliable. Since the phenomenon of first visibility is connected with sunset, all such tables involve inaccuracies of one full day."<sup>26</sup>

Specifically in reference to the subject of our present quest, G. M. Clemence of the U.S. Naval Observatory wrote that "the interval from new moon to the appearance of the crescent cannot be calculated from theory alone. Criteria must be established empirically for each individual geographical locality. Different writers have not always agreed completely on these criteria; and, moreover, some allowance presumably must be made for variations due to local practices and circumstances at the time of each observation. . . . *The dates of Nisan 14 in the years of the first century of the Christian era cannot possibly be determined by any astronomical calculation; they can be fixed, if by any means at all, only by the study and interpretation of contemporary records.*"<sup>27</sup>

So, when all is said that can be said by astronomy, we are best off to accept the biblical statement that Jesus would "cause sacrifice and offering to cease" "in the midst of the week."

There is no reason *not* to take A.D. 31 as the year of the crucifixion.

**6. Was a Passover Friday possible at all in A.D. 31?** Mindful of every caution in the previous answer, curious readers may still hanker to know whether astronomy can in any way discern a Friday crucifixion in A.D. 31.

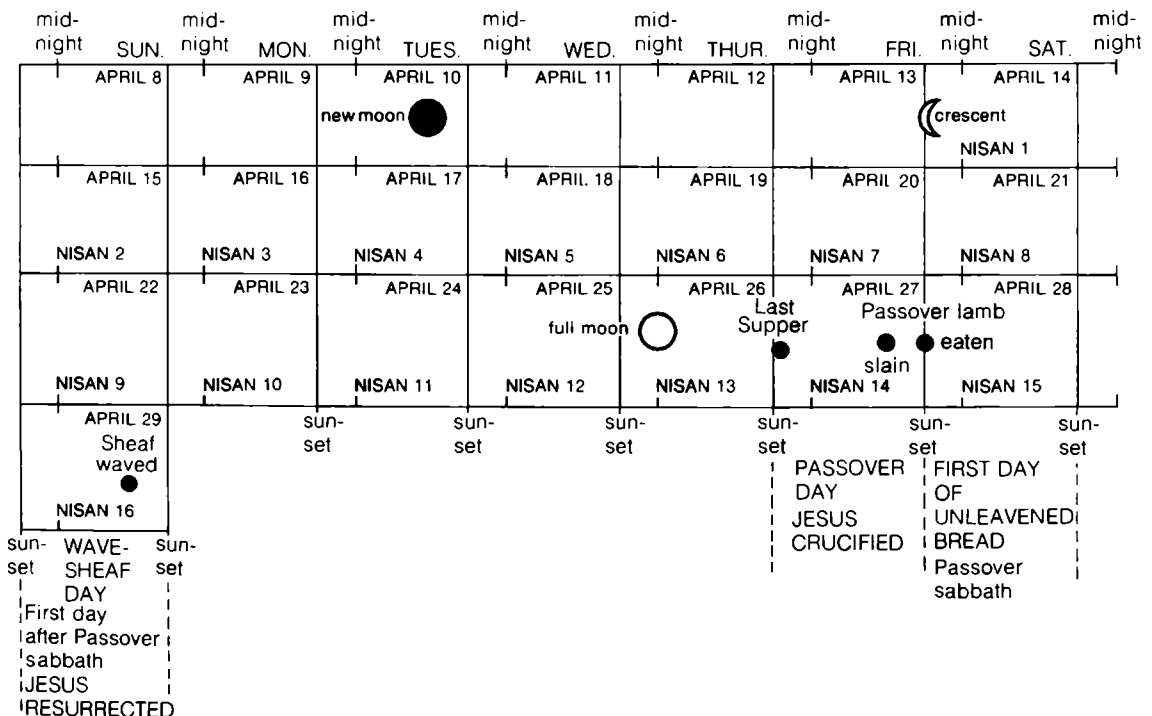
The answer is that, yes, a Friday crucifixion in A.D. 31 is entirely "possible" according to astronomical calculations (for whatever they may be worth), granted a few unprovable yet reasonable assumptions.

We assume to begin with that the March 12 new moon (conjunction) was too early for the barley-harvest requirement. (Dated Jewish papyri found at Elephantine do not allow Nisan to begin as early as March 14, and neither did the Babylonian cycle.) So, with March 12 regarded as too early, the new moon prior to Nisan 1 in the year 31 becomes the one listed as number 12755 on page 86 of Goldstine's computer printout, for Tuesday afternoon, April 10. Goldstine's time for the new moon is 2:45 p.m. in Babylon. In Jerusalem, some 850 kilometers or 525 miles to the west, the new moon occurred thirty-seven minutes earlier, local time.

If the interval between this April 10 new moon and the first visibility of the crescent moon at Jerusalem was a very long 3.19 days, as it could have been, or if it was shorter but was obscured the first night, the crescent was observed at sunset on Friday, April 13.

With the observation of the crescent, the month of Nisan commenced at once and Nisan 1 should be dated in our Julian-Gregorian calendar as the Saturday, April 14, which followed at midnight. The fourteenth night thereafter, counting the evening of the crescent (inclusive reckoning), brought Jerusalem to the commencement of Nisan 14 at sunset on April 26, a Thursday. Thus April 27, the Passover day on which Jesus died, was a Friday—Friday, Nisan 14, A.D. 31.

A diagram may help to make this statement clearer.



## References

1. Porteous, *Daniel*, p. 134.
2. Gerhard F. Hasel, "The Seventy Weeks of Daniel 9:24-27," *Ministry*, May 1976, insert. Hasel claims to know only two commentators who have suggested any other interpretation.
3. Jacques Doukhan, "The Seventy Weeks of Daniel 9: An Exegetical Study," *Andrews University Seminary Studies* 17 (1979):1-22.
4. *Ibid.* This article provides an excellent analysis of the literary structure of Daniel 9:24-27.
5. Hippolytus, *Commentary on Daniel*, frag. 2.39, 40; ANF, 5:184.
6. Harold W. Hoehner, *Chronological Aspects of the Life of Christ* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan Publishing House, 1975), pp. 95-98.
7. G. R. Caird, "Chronology of the N.T., The," *The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible*.
8. Martin Hengel, *Crucifixion in the Ancient World, and the Folly of the Message of the Cross* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1977); H. Haas, "Anthropological Observations on the Skeletal Remains from Giv'at ha'Mivtar," *Israel Exploration Journal* 20 (1970):38, 39; Anthony F. Sava, M.D., "The Wounds of Christ," *The Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 16 (1954):438-443.
9. Young, *Daniel*, p. 209.
10. See, e.g., W. R. Thompson, "Chronology of the New Testament," *The Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible*, which recommends A.D. 33 or 34 for the conversion of Paul, and *The Westminster Dictionary of the Bible*, rev. ed., art. "Paul," which suggests A.D. 35. The stoning of Stephen occurred at some point prior to Paul's conversion.
11. See Froom, *Prophetic Faith*, 2:196.
12. See *ibid.*, 1:750.
13. Corrie ten Boom with John and Elizabeth Sherrill, *The Hiding Place* (Washington Depot, Conn.: Chosen Books, 1971), chap. 15.
14. A. T. Olmstead, *History of the Persian Empire* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1948), p. 344.
15. *Ibid.*, pp. 308, 312.
16. For a survey of the work of the Masoretes (sometimes spelled, "Massoretes") see F. F. Bruce, *The Books and the Parchments*, 3d rev. ed. (London: Pickering & Inglis, 1963), pp. 40-42, 117-124.
17. These examples are from Desmond Ford, *Daniel* (Nashville, Tenn.: Southern Publishing Association, 1978), p. 229.
18. See, e.g., Caird, "Chronology," and Roger Rusk, "The Day He Died," *Christianity Today*, March 29, 1974, pp. 720-722.
19. Herman H. Goldstine, *New and Full Moons, 1001 B.C. to A.D. 1651* (Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society, 1973).
20. Siegfried H. Horn and Lynn H. Wood, *The Chronology of Ezra 7*, rev. ed. (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association), 1970, pp. 47n, 83, 119, 156.
21. Achilles Tatianus, "Isagogue," *Uranologion*, 141, in Grace Amadon, "Ancient Jewish Calendation," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 61 (1942):260. (The Amadon article must be read with care, as it combines commendable research with some insupportable speculation.)
22. Joannes Hevelius, *Selenographia* (Gedani, 1647), p. 274, in Amadon, "Ancient Jewish Calendation," p. 260.
23. In William Hales, *New Analysis of Chronology* (London, 1830), 1:67.
24. The evidence is summarized briefly in Earle Hilgert, "The Jubilees Calendar and the Origin of Sunday Observance," *Andrews University Seminary Studies* 1 (1963):44-51.



25. D. H. Sadler to Francis D. Nichol, January 24, 1956, in *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, ed. Francis D. Nichol, 7 vols. (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1953-1957), 5:263.

26. O. Neugebauer to Francis D. Nichol, January 19, 1956, in *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, ed. Francis D. Nichol, 7 vols. (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1953-1957), 5:263, 264.

27. G. M. Clemence to Francis D. Nichol, January 24, 1956, in *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, ed. Francis D. Nichol, 7 vols. (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1953-1957), 5:262. Emphasis supplied.

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